GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES:

OR,

Some Sermons concerning the Promiſes, and the right application thereof.

Whereunto are added ſome other concerning the uſefulneſs of Faith in advancing Sanctification.

As alſo, three more concerning the Faith of Aſſurance.

By that pious and faithful Servant of JESUS CHRIST,

Mr. ANDREW GRAY, late Miniſter at *Glaſgow.*

All being reviſed ſince his death by ſome friends.

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the flesh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

GLASGOW,

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ARCHIVES

TO THE READER.

CHriſtian Reader,

Although (upon ſome conſiderations) theſe following Sermons *have been keeped back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Preſs from other things: yet was it at firſt intended (the connexion of the purpoſes ſo requiring) that they ſhould have come forth aſſoon as ſome other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publiſh: And therefore, in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and gave the Reader ſuch advertiſements as we conceived neceſſary concerning the one as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at preſent, but to put this little Piece into thy hands, commending it to thy ſerious thoughts, and the Lords bleſſing upon them. Neither ſhal we uſe many words to this purpoſe; Only, we find ſome help is offered unto thee, in three moſt weighty and concerning points of Chriſtian Religion.* 1. *How by the lively exerciſe of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promiſes.* 2. *How by Faith thou may advance the work of Sanctification. And* 3. *how thy Faith may grow up unto aſſurance. Of all which we may truly ſay, that nothing can more ſeaſonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the ſouls of the Lords people in theſe times.*

O how neceſſary is it in ſuch troubleſome dayes to learn, how through Faith and Patience, we may inherit the Promiſes: *and now when our ſtrong*

ruption hath (in a manner) neceſſitate the wiſe Phyſitian to mix unto us ſo bitter a cup, and give ſo ſtrong a potion, in what a fainting and ſwounding condition muſt we be, if by the two immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to lie, we *receive not alſo,* the ſtrong conſolation.

Again, when prophanity and ungodlineſs hath ſo abounded in theſe Nations, that from the top of the head, to the ſole of the foot, there is no ſoundneſs, but wounds and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores. *And when the corruption of the Time, like the ſons of* Zerviah, *are grown too ſtrong, even for the Davids who are amongſt us; What ſhould we ſtudy with more earneſtneſs,* then to purify our hearts by faith, *and by* having theſe promiſes, to cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord? 3. *When the Lord hath removed us ſo far from peace, that the ſouls of many have even* forgot proſperity, *and the multiplied changes, and revolutions in our days hath ſo clearly demonſtrate the inſtability of all ſublunary glory, and ſo convincingly taught us, that this* is not our reſt; *undoubtedly, it is time to* look for a City that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure. *The ſubject then is uſeful.*

As to the manner of handling it: It is true, much accuracy and neatneſs, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the haſty gleaning of a Church writer. And as to livelineſs and power, though it be as eaſie to draw a picture with the heat and motion of a living man, as to write or print theſe lively motions of the Spirit which do often accompany

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the Lords Messengers in preaching, and in an eminent measure, were also let out upon this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously and feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore spake: *Yea, both conceptions and expressions savouring much of an exercised spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self; but even thirsting also, and panting for the Salvation of others: nay,* (*in some measure*) travelling in birth till Christ might be formed in them. *Oh, that more of this holy zeal and fervency, might accompany this great measure of light and knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both on Pastors and people in this generation, that once again we may see,* (*as in the days of* John the Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. *And that the blessed Spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and inlarge thy Soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternal salvation, is, and shall be the sincere desires of.*

Thy Servants for
Christs sake,

RO. TRAIL.
JO. STERLING.

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GREAT

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that is in the World through lust.*

MAY we not truly say, that if ever the Christians who live in these days shall be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shall inherit everlasting life, all these that are now before his Throne, may lay aside their Harps and give us leave to sing? Will it not be a mystery, suppose we, unto heavenly *Enoch* that spent so much of his time in communion and fellowship with God, when he shall behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corresponding with God? Will it not be a mystery unto believing *Abraham*, when he shal behold such misbelievers, such disputers of the promises of God, advanced to reign with Christ? Will it not be a mystery unto wrestling *Jacob*, when he shall behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Prin-

ces

ces to wrestle with God, till they did prevail? Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shall behold such impatient Christians, as we have been, entering into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shall behold such unmortified Christians entering within that City, unto which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a mystery unto tender *Josiah*, to behold such Christians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a stone within us, entering into heaven? Will it not be a mystery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold such hypocritical Christians, as the most part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to see those that have been cloathed with hypocrisie and guile, now cloathed with the Robes of immortal Glory? And will it not be a mystery unto self denied *Paul*, when he shall behold so proud and selfish Christians enter into Heaven? Give me leave to say this, go where we will, we shall be matchless and singular: for if we shall enter into eternity of pain, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the infinit justice of God, in regard of mercies we have received: as if we shal enter into eternity of joy, we shal be the greatest debtors unto the spotless grace of Christ, in regard of mercy we have abused. There shal be none in heaven like to us, and if we shall go to hell, there shall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but adde this further before I come to the words, go where we will, we shal be out of doubt without condition.

Within

Within a ſhort time a real Chriſtian ſhal be exalted above the reach of his misbleiving, a hypocrite ſhal be depreſſed below the reach of his faith; and one that as groſly in nature; he ſhall be abaſed beyond the reach of his preſumption: a Chriſtian ere long, ſhal misbelieve no more: a hypocrite ere long, ſhal believe no more: and one that is groſly in nature, ſhal ere long preſume no more. There is no misbelief in heaven: and there is no faith, nor preſumption in well being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to ſpeak to, we told you, when firſt we began our diſcourſe upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith, that we intended to ſpeak of Faith under a rwofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, as it is juſtifying. And ſecondly, as it is ſanctifying. For the firſt, we reſolved to ſpeak to it in a two-fold conſideration. Firſt, as it cloſeth with Chriſt ſimply, as the object upon which it reſteth: and of this we have ſpoken from that place, 1 *John* 1. 3. 23. Secondly, as it cloſeth with Chriſt, as held forth in the promiſes. And now being to ſpeak of it in thir conſideration, we have made choice of this place, in which thoſe things concerning the promiſes, ſhortly.

1. Ye have that fountain and ſpring from whence the promiſes do flow, holden forth in the firſt words of the verſe, *whereby*, or as the words may be more fitly rendered, *by whom*, relating unto Jeſus Chriſt, who is the original & ſpring of all.

2. The properties of the promiſes, and theſe are: 1. The freedom of the promiſes held forth

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in that word *given whereby are given*; which speaketh this, that the promiſes are free gifts, flowing only from good pleaſure. 2. Their unchangeableneſs, and that is holden forth alſo in the word *given*; the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are exceeding great, and the promiſes are called great, either in reſpect of that price that was laid down to purchaſe the promiſes, or they are called great, in reſpect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are precious. Now the promiſes are called precious, either in reſpect of their original, that they come from precious Chriſt; or elſe in reſpect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object *quo*, or *by which*) of precious faith, as it is called in the firſt verſe of this chapter; or elſe they are precious, becauſe they are things that a Chriſtian ought to put an high account upon. For the word that is rendered precious, may likewiſe be rendered honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promiſes.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantage of the promiſes: *By them we are made partakers of the divine nature.* Now this is not to be underſtood of any eſſential converſion of our ſubſtance into the ſubſtance of God, but of a Chriſtian having the divine vertues of Jeſus Chriſt impreſſed upon his ſoul, and expreſſed in his life and converſation.

And there is this laſtly, concerning the promiſes in the words, even the time when the promiſes are eminently accompliſhed; it is, *when we*

have

have eſcaped; or as the word is, *when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through luſt*.. That is the time when a Chriſtian meeteth with the accompliſhment of the promiſes.

Now before we can ſpeak to any of theſe, we muſt ſpeak a little unto ſome things, as neceſſary to be known, in order, to the better underſtanding of all. 1. We ſhal not dwel long in pointing out unto you what is a promiſe. We conceive it is a glorious diſcovery of the good will of God towards ſinners; and withal, a purpoſe and intendment, and (if we may ſay) an engagement to beſtow ſome ſpiritual or temporal good upon them, or to with-hold ſome ſpiritual or temporal evil from them. And certain it is, that in this deſcription of the promiſe, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteouſneſs and Peace, they kiſs one another. Neither ſhal we ſtand long to point out the diſtinction of the promiſes. 1. There are ſome promiſes that are conditional, and there are ſome promiſes that are abſolute: abſolute promiſes are theſe that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them: ſuch a promiſe is that, that God will deſtroy the World no more by water; that is an abſolute promiſe: ſuch a promiſe was that of Gods ſending his Son into the world, that was an abſolute promiſe: and ſuch is that promiſe of converſion, in giving the heart of fleſh, it is an abſolute promiſe. As for the conditional promiſes, they are theſe that do require ſome condition to be performed by the Chriſtian, before the accompliſhment of the promiſe,

promiſe, ſuch as that promiſe of ſalvation, it re-quireth believing, as going before it. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved.* And pardon, it is promiſed unto a Chriſtian upon repentance. And yet we confeſs, that there is not a conditional promiſe that is in all the covenant of grace, but it may be reduced unto an abſolute promiſe, in regard that the thing promiſed (in the conditional promiſe) is one abſolute free gift, and the condition of the promiſe is another. 2. There are ſome promiſes that are temporal, and ſome that are ſpiritual: temporal promiſes are theſe that promiſe ſome temporal thing unto a Chriſtian; and ſpiritual promiſes are theſe that promiſe the beſtowing of ſomething that is of everlaſting concernment. 3. There are ſome promiſes that are not accompliſhed in this life, ſuch as this, *That we ſhal ſee him as he is, and ſhall be made like unto him.* But as for the promiſes of Faith and Juſtification, theſe are accompliſhed in this life. 4. There are ſome promiſes that are extraordinary, and there are ſome promiſes that are common: extraordinary promiſes are theſe that are given to ſome particular believers, as a ſingular priviledge; ſuch was that promiſe that was given to *Abraham*, *That in his ſeed ſhould all families of the earth be bleſſed*: and that promiſe that was given to *Rebekah*, *That the elder ſhould ſerve the younger.* As for common promiſes, they are theſe, that every Believer in Chriſt hath a right to make uſe of.

Neither ſhal we ſtand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Chriſtian to be much in the exer-

exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes: it is clear from *Pſal.* 6.8. *Truſt in him at all times, ye people.* And it is clear from the practiſe of that precious cloud of witneſſes, recorded of in *Heb.* 11. that ſpent their dayes in embracing of the promiſes. But, 7. We would have you conſider, that it is more eaſie for a Chriſtian to believe ſpiritual promiſes, then to believe temporal promiſes: it is eaſier to truſt Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, then to truſt him for our daily food, when we are redacted unto ſtraits. And the grounds upon which we aſſert this, may be theſe. 1. Becauſe it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe that Chriſts death reacheth for the purchaſing of temporal promiſes; which more eaſily he taketh up in ſpiritual promiſes: for a Chriſtian can hardly believe that ſuch a thing was in Chriſts intention, as to die for his daily food, which yet is moſt certain, if we conſider it as a ſpecial mercy. 2. In a Chriſtians believing of ſpiritual promiſes, there is often ſome ſenſe and reaſon that helpeth him to the exerciſe of faith, at leaſt, they preſs not the contrary: but to believe a temporal promiſe, when a Chriſtian is redacted unto a ſtrait, and that he can ſee no out-gate preſent, ſenſe and reaſon ſtands upon the top of his faith, and preſſeth him to deſpair. As for inſtance, when a Chriſtian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to ſup at night, to believe that there is a promiſe upon which he may reſt, that he ſhal not want his food; but that if the Lord have ſervice for him, he will provide; there he hath not only reaſon to diſpute againſt, but the ſtrong pinching ſenſe of hunger, both crying

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ing out how can bread be given in the wilderneſs?
3. The tentations that aſſault a Chriſtian to miſ
belief upon temporal promiſes, they are more ſubt
tile and more connatural to a Chriſtian, then hi
tentations that aſſault him in reſting upon ſpiritua
promiſes. When a Chriſtian is in ſtraits in thi
World, the tentations that hinder his exerciſe o
faith, they are more conſonant unto fleſh & blood
we are ready to yield to misbelief then, becauſe w
think it is rational, and ſpeaketh the truth. 4
Chriſtian is often ſo affrighted by his daily failing
or ſome particular more groſs out-breakings in hi
life; that howbeit he may (through grace) b
helped to believe that the Lord ſhal make out thei
promiſes which concern his eternal ſalvation, an
ſo do him good in the latter end: yet may he b
ſadly perplexed and diſtruſtful in making uſe o
any particular temporary promiſe, for drawin
forth any comfort or incouragement there from
as to his preſent exigent: becauſe he knoweth th
although the Lord doth forgive His peoples ini
quities, yet may he take vengeance on their in
ventions, *Pſalm* 99. 8. And therefore may pu
niſh his preſent failing with the like calamities a
he hath done others 5. There is alſo much of
natural and carnal ſelf-love to a preſent life, re
maining in the beſt, that we are many time
worſe to ſatisfie in our ſecurities for the things o
this life, then of that which is to come, and ca
more eaſily truſt the Lord for our ſouls, then fo
our bodies. ſo that though his naked word wi
ſometimes ſatisfie us for the one, yet it will no
for the other. And the laſt ground of it may be
Chriſt

ſs: Chriſtians unacquaintedneſs with the lot of exer-
iſeiſing faith upon temporal promiſes, there being
ubmany who think not that there is uſe for faith, ex-
hicept for ſalvation and the things above, which
uamaketh his faith upon theſe more difficult then
thupon promiſes that are ſpiritual: And this may
e appear moſt clearly, in that we find men more
odeaſily bear their ſpiritual wants (even a Chriſtian
wwhat is moſt exerciſed) then they bear their tem-
poral wants; and more corruption and impati-
gence doth ariſe from temporal want, then from
hiſpiritual want.

b 2. Conſider, that all a Chriſtians duties are
eſturned over into promiſes: there is not a duty
anthat is required of a Chriſtian, but it is converted
bunto a promiſe. Is not Faith a duty, in 1 Joh. 3.
e 23 *This is his commandment that ye ſhould believe?*
inAnd is not that turned over in a promiſe, in Jere.
m3. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father?* The word
himporteth not only an act of neceſſary, but of vio-
nience, thou ſhalt do it, and in the 13. of *Zechary*,
inat the cloſe, *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father.* And
pso in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortifi ation a Chriſti-
s ans duty, in *Coloſſ.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your*
ſ *members*; and it is turned over in a promiſe, in
re *Jerem.* 32. 28. and *Ezek.* 36. 29. where he pro-
nomiſeth, that he will purge away all their uncleans-
s neſſes; and it is moſt clear from *Mic.* 7. 19. *I will*
csubdue, ſaid he, *all thine iniquities*: it is not ſaid,
ſe *thou muſt ſubdue them*, but *I will do it.* Is not alſo
wthe knowledge of God a commanded duty? and
nyet it is turned over in a promiſe in the covenant
eof grace, *They ſhal know me from the higheſt to*
iſh *the*

the loweſt, neither shal there be need any more th one should ſay, know the Lord, for they shal be taught of me. Is not the commandment of fe your duty? as is clear from *Eccleſ.* 12.13. and y that is likewiſe turned over in a promiſe: *I w put my fear in their inward parts, and they shall depart away from me:* So tenderneſs is a Chriſ ans duty: and yet that is turned over in a promi *I will take away their heart of ſtone, and give th an heart of flesh.* And that I may ſay no more this, look but to theſe four places, and there will ſee almoſt all duties turned over in promiſe there is *Jer.* 31. *Jer.* 32. *Ezek.* 11. *Ezek.* 36. ye w ſee all the duties of the covenant converted in promiſes. But may not ſome ſay, What adva tage is thereof of this? much certainly, every wa That the duties are turned over into promiſes, may give a Chriſtian hope, that he ſhal once pe form theſe duties? will ye not once be tender; y certainly, becauſe your tenderneſs lyeth within promiſe; will ye not once be much in the exerci of fear? no doubt ye will, and the ground of it this, becauſe your fear lyeth within a promiſe, a ſo of the reſt. And 2. there is this advantage of that all the duties required of a Chriſtian are tur ed over in promiſes; becauſe by this means a Ch ſtian may go to God, when he cannot perfor ſuch a duty and deſire him to fulfill his word a accompliſh his promiſe: and ſo may make u not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of t faithfulneſs of God alſo.

There is this third conſideration that we wou propoſe, that there are ſome things of a Chriſti

ithin a promiſe, that he doth not believe to be ithin it, eſpecially theſe three. Firſt, the chalnges of a Chriſtian are within a promiſe, when e are convinced, that is, the accompliſhment of a romiſe, this is clear from *Iſai.* 30. 21. where conictions and challenges are turned over into a proiſe; *When thou art turning to the right hand or to e left, thine ears shal hear a voice behind thee, ying, this is the way, walk in it*: & it may be clear at our convictions are the accompliſhment of romiſes, becauſe it is a work of the Comforter, well to convince, *John* 16. 9. as it is for him to ake one rejoyce. And if a Chriſtian could believe at his challenges were the accompliſhment of a romiſe, he might imbrace his challenges, he ight ſee the faithfulneſs of God in his challenges, d he might ſee much love in his challenges.

A Chriſtians croſs is within a promiſe, ſo that hen a Chriſtian meets with ſuch affliction, he ay ſit down and cry out, this is the accompliſhent of a promiſe: and this is clear from *Pſal.* 89. 32. wherein in the midſt of the promiſes of e covenant of grace, that promiſe of viſiting eir iniquities with rods, is put in the boſome of em: and from *Pſalm* 119. 75. *In faithfulneſs ſt thou afflicted me.* Why did *David* ſay in faithlneſs? It was this, becauſe his croſs was the acmplishment of a promiſe: and it may be clear ſo from that word in *Heb.* 11. 7. *Forget not the xhortation* (ſpeaking of the croſs) the word is, *orget not the conſolation that ſpeaketh unto you*: as the holy Ghoſt did ſay, croſſes do yield much nſolation, as in verſe 11. *They yield the peace-*

able

able fruits of righteouſneß; and if this were be-
lieved, that our croſſes were the accompliſhme
of the promiſes, it would help a Chriſtian un
much humble ſubmiſſion; and there would not
murmuring under them, if once we did belie
that they were the accompliſhment of a promiſe
yea, there is this advantage further, that if we d
believe, that our croſſes were the accompliſhme
of a promiſe, we would be much in advancing h
lineſs under our croſs. There is nothing that o
ſtructeth the ſweet fruits of righteouſneſs unde
croſs, ſo much as impatiency. And I would
this to commend the croſs, a Chriſtian never mo
eth ſo ſwiftly to heaven, as when he is under
ſanctified croſs; a croſs when it is ſanctified, w
proove a Chriſtians motions to heaven, more th
ten enjoymens, for our enjoyments ordinari
do retard our way as much as further it. And the
is this, thirdly, that is within the promiſes, ev
your daily food, and the hairs of your head, t
hairs of a Chriſtians head are numbered, and wit
in the Covenant. So that we may ſee what a hi
reſpect Chriſt hath put upon Chriſtians, that
cleared from that word, Pſal. 111. 4 5. *He ha*
given meat unto them that fear him, he will ever
mindful of his covenant.

Our fourth conſideration ſhal be to point
a little thoſe grounds upon which Chriſt doth
lay his accompliſhment of the promiſe, it is c
tain that a Chriſtian is often times put to th
Doth his promiſe fail for evermore? and cryeth o
Why art thou become unto me as a lyare, and
waters that fail? And the grounds of this delay
the

these: 1. Christ knoweth that a Christian can often better improve the delay of the accomplishment of the promise, then he can improve the accomplishment it self; we might find it is in our experience (it being for the most part) easier for a Christian to bear his crosses, then to bear his enjoyments. I think *David* never had so sweet a time as then, when he was pursued as a Partridge by his son *Absolon*: then grace did breath forth most sweetly, in his actions: but let *David* be under prosperity, and then we see he falleth in the sin of adultery. And therefore never repine when we are under a cross, for certainly, if we had spiritual understanding, we would not judge it so great a hazard to be under a cross, as unde prosperity, since we have greater strength to bear the one, then to endure the other. 2. The slothfulness of a Christian to whom the promises are made, this maketh the promises to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Israel*, they are fourty years in a wilderness, before that promise of entering into *Canaan* in accomplished it was a promise that could have been accomplished in a few days, and yet because of their sin, it was not accomplished for fourty years, as ye may see from that word in *Numb.* 14 33. 34. 3. The accomplishment of the promises is delayed, that faith may be more put in exercise: this is clear from that remarkable word in *Ps.* 105 19 *Untill the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accomplished; *The word of the Lord did try him*; that is, it was the matter of his exercise, an exercise especially unto faith; for indeed it is much

much for a Christian to believe upon a word when it is delayed in its accomplishment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exercise of prayer may be more, and it is certain, that the best improvement of delays is, to be much in prayer: the promises they do occasion prayer, as is clear from *Exod.* 4. last. *They believed, and bowed down their heads and worshipped:* and from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where the great promises being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God:* and it is clear from *Psalm* 119.49. *Perform thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delayes, when we turn impatient: and it is a bad improvement of delayes when we quite our confidence. Know that promises are accomplished after delayes, and they have a luster upon them that they may compensate all the delay. 5. There is this other ground of the delayes of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be more sweet to a Christian when it cometh. This is clear from that word of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 13. 13. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire doth come, it is a tree of life.* O but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise, it is sweet, yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, is more sweet then *a feast of fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined.* So take up your bread and your drink as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshful to you. 6. The Lord delays his promises, that a Christian may be more in the exe

exerciſe of dependency, & may be always keeped about the Throne. A Chriſtian goeth to God from a threefold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of neceſſity, and from a principle of love: but would you know that which putteth the Chriſtian oftenneſt to God? It is a principle of neceſſity: And believe it, that if neceſſity did not drive a Chriſtian into the foot of the Throne, we would ſeldom go from a principle of love, or from a principle of Faith. And there is this laſt ground of the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, that the glory of the wiſdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accompliſhment of the promiſe. When the promiſe is lying beneath ground, then the wiſdom and power of God doth more appear in the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And from this I would only ſay to Chriſtians that are under that exerciſe; complaining of the want of performance of promiſes: theſe few things. 1. Believe that the promiſe ſhall once be accompliſhed that though the *viſion tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak.* Believe that every hours delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe hath a ſweet deſign of love: There is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Chriſtian, as is clear from that word, *Rom.* 8. 28. And 3. that promiſe that cometh after long delays it hath theſe three ſweet ſoul-refreſhing attendants. 1. It is performed moſt ſeaſonably, a Chriſtian if he will obſerve, will ſee infinit wiſdom ſhining in timing the accompliſhment of the promiſe to ſuch a particu-

lar day. A Chriſtian will be conſtrained to c
out, if the promiſe had been fulfilled before, the
had not been ſuch art of wiſdom appearing in t
performance of it. 2. That the promiſe when it
accompliſhed, will engage a Chriſtian more
the exerciſe of love, then four promiſes accor
pliſhed at a ſhort and ſmaller time. There is n
thing that will ſo inflame the ſoul with love, as
have a promiſe accompliſhed after delays. And
the promiſes accompliſhed after delays, have m
ſenſe waiting upon the performance thereof
think hardly a Chriſtian ever met with the acco
pliſhment of a promiſe after long delay, but
ſoul was made as a watered garden, and as ſpri
of water whoſe waters fail not: this promiſe fa
and comes to a Chriſtian perfumed with love.

Now we ſhall ſhut up our diſcourſe at
time, and ſhal only ſpeak to thoſe ſix defects
Chriſtians faith in believing the promiſes. 1. T
our faith is impatient, we cannot ſtay upon
promiſe if it be delayed. Hence ye will ſee
in Scripture often patience is annexed to fai
which ſpeaketh this, That it is impoſſible
Chriſtian to believe as he ought, that wantethe
exerciſe of patience. See Heb. 6 12. *Be ye*
lowers of them, who through faith and patienc
herit the promiſe: and that word in the Rev
tion, *This is the faith and patience of the Sa*
2. Our faith in cloſing with the promiſes, it
moſt unconſtant. A Chriſtian when firſt a
miſe is born in upon his ſpirit, he will then
the promiſe and joyn with it: but after ſix o
ven dayes go about, he will change his Faith

is remarkably clear from *Exod.* 4. 31. compared with *Exod.* 6. 9. When firſt the promiſe cometh to the people of *Iſrael*, that they ſhall go out of *Egypt*, it is ſaid of them in the fourth Chapter at the cloſe, *They believed the promiſe, and worshipped*: But look to them in *Exod.* 6. 9. and there ye will ſee them not believing, becauſe of *bitterneſs and anxiety of heart.* And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconſtant. 1. Sometimes the reading of a promiſe to a Chriſtian will be as the ſavory meat: Sometimes when a Chriſtian will read one time in the covenant, it will be performed with love, & his ſoul will be tranſported with joy after it, and at another time, when he ſhall read that promiſe again, it will be *taſteleſs as the white of an egge*; and *as his ſorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in ſtudying the exerciſe of the things that are promiſed, which certainly would cut ſhort many of our debates, There is in this third defect of faith, that we are not diligent: A diligent faith we call this, that after a Chriſtian hath believed, he would be much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accompliſhment of the promiſe, he would be much in the exerciſe of meditation, to make that promiſe lively and ſweet to him. And a fourth defect is this, we build our Faith more upon diſpenſations then upon the word. When diſpenſations ſay that which the promiſe ſaith, then we will believe, but when diſpenſation ſpeaketh the contrary language unto the promiſe, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great myſteries of believing, It is hard for a Chriſtian to believe when the com-

mentary ſeemeth to deſtroy the Text: that is, when the commentary ſeemeth to declare that the promiſe ſhall never be accompliſhed. In ſum, is this, It is hard to believe when diſpenſation will ſay, the word of the Lord will fail, and when promiſes bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Chriſtian to take impoſſibilities in the one hand, and the word of promiſe in the other, and ſay, O precious Chriſt, reconcile theſe two together, that impoſſibilities do not deſtroy the promiſe, but that the promiſe may be accompliſhed notwithſtanding of theſe. 5. We have this defect of faith amongſt us, that we build our faith more upon ſenſe, then upon the word of promiſe: when a Chriſtian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Chriſt hideth his face, he will then give over his hope. And laſtly, there is this, that our faith upon the promiſes is general, we believe the truth of the promiſes: but we ſtudy not to make a particular application of them. I ſhall not ſtand long to make any uſe of what we have ſpoken: only, I would have the Chriſtians of this age, and thoſe that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promiſes. A Chriſtian neglecteth theſe three duties of Religion moſt, he neglecteth the duty of ſelf examining, the duty of believing the promiſes, and the noble ſoul-exalting duty of meditation: theſe three duties a Chriſtian doth ſo conſtantly neglect, that almoſt he is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them.

But I would ſay a word unto thoſe that are deſtitute of the faith of the promiſes, and are ſtrangers

gers unto theſe bleſſed things that are recorded within the covenant. And it is only this, doubtleſs ye will believe your ſenſes, if ye wil not believe his word It is a queſtion indeed, which of all the ſenſes ſhal be moſt ſatisfied in heaveo, whether that of ſeeing, when we *shal behold the* King *in his beauty, and ſee him as he is*? Or that of hearing, when we ſhal hear theſe melodious *Halelujahs* of that *innumerable company, which are about the Throne*, without any jarring amongſt them all? O that of ſmelling, when we ſhal find the ſweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed with *all the powders of the Merchants*? Or that of touching, when we ſhal find *Maries* inhibition taken off; *Touch me not*, and be admitted to imbrace him who is now *aſcended to his Father*. Or that of taſting, when we ſhal drink of theſe *rivers of conſolation, that shal never run dry*? This I ſay is indeed a queſtion, but give me leave to tell you. O Atheiſts, and enemies to God: It is alſo a queſtion, which of all the five ſenſes of a reprobate ſhall be moſt tormented in Hell, and what would you anſwer to it now? Whither think ye the ſenſe of ſight, when ye ſhal behold that darkneſs of wrath, the Devil and his angels, & your fellow priſoners in that dungeon? Or whether ſhall your ſenſe of hearing be moſt tormented in Hell, when ye ſhal hear thoſe ſcreighings & howlings that ſhal eternally aſcend up before God, by the ſouls that are in priſon? O but the greateſt enemy would have compaſſion upon his enemy, to hear their cryes. Or, whether will ye ſay the ſenſe of taſting ſhal be moſt tormented, when

ye ſhall drink of theſe *rivers of brimſtone*? O will the ſenſe of touching, when ye ſhal be eter nally ſcorched with theſe flames of eternal indig nation? Or the ſenſe of ſmelling, when ye ſha eternally be, as it were, ſuffocated with the ſmoa of that ſolphurious furnace that ſhall never b quenched? O think you if *Cain* would com from Hell and preach that Doctrine, that w ſhould not perſecute the Saints, would we liſte unto him? If *Abſalon* ſhould come from Hel and ſhould preach againſt the evil of ambition would we liſten unto him? And if *Achitoph* ſhould riſe from the dead & preach that Doctrin unto you, *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſ dom*, would we ſtop our ear? Or if *Judas* woul come from Hell and preach the evil of hypocriſ in betraying the Son of man with a kiſs, woul we believe him? O if *Dives* that is recorded i the Goſpel, should come from Hell, and choo that Text to preach upon, in *James* 5. 1. *Go to rich men and howl, and weep for your miſeries tha ſhal come upon you.* And if *Demas* would com & ſecond him with that word, *Love not the world nor the things that are in the World*; I fear y would cry out, we will imbrace that Doctrine *another time*. We deſire not to inſiſt much upo theſe; but, O to believe that there is an eterni of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I wi give you a deſcription of the Atheiſt, and let hi think upon it, it is eaſier to convince hundreds you that you want the fear of God, then that y want the faith and love of God. Oh, an imag nary faith, and a conceit of love, will ye ev

qui

uite theſe two idols? I confeſs, once ye ſhal have faith that no man ſhal ever rob you of, and that , the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter nto eternity of pain, there is no redemption out f that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he ſhal render vengeance unto thoſe that know him not. To his bleſſed and moſt precious Name we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON II.

2 Pet. 1 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promiſes, that by theſe ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the World through luſt.*

THough Juſtice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet mercy and truth do go before it, as two divine Uſhers to convey us home unto God. There are theſe two things that we would have a Chriſtian principally to ſtudy. 1. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Chriſt. And 2. that ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe infinite acts of precious condeſcendency that Chriſt hath manifeſted towards you, that the one may provoke you unto ſorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a ſweet aſtoniſhment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Chriſt ſhould preſent that challenge unto you, which *Abſolon* preſented unto *Hushai*: *Is this thy kindneſs unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you anſwer, when you were thus re-

proved? I think if Christ had not forgetfulneſs fo
that bleſſed end, to forget the wrongs and injuri
of his own; I know not unto what uſe Chri
ſhould have forgetfulneſs; for he knoweth no
what it is to forget our good works, but he hath
bleſſed art of forgetting our wrongs; though w
may ſay upon the contrary, that we have a curſe
art of forgetting them our ſelves. There are thel
three things that Chriſtians doth forget; they for
get much Chriſt, that is the great Author of th
promiſes, ſo that he may charge them with this
Why have ye forgotten me? 2. They forget the
mercies, and theſe divine receipts of love tha
Chriſt hath given unto them. 3. They forge
even their iniquities, yea ſometimes they forge
them before Chriſt doth forget them, and paſs a
act of pardon upon them. I ſhall not ſtand long t
plead with you for your undervaluings of tha
bleſſed and noble plant of renown: I think if ther
were no more to evidence that low eſtime tha
we have of Chriſt, but only this, that we are ſ
much in ſlighting the promiſes, it were more ther
ſufficient: but beſides, is there not this to teſtify
how much you undervalue that *Holy and juſt One*,
that ye ſtudy more to have an outward confor-
mity unto him, then to have an inward. We
may call the Chriſtians of this time *Nephthali*,
they are as *a hind let looſe*, and they give goodly
words; but we do not give Chriſt godly practi-
ſes. And is not there this alſo that teſtifieth our
undervaluings of Chriſt, that we ſlight ſo much
ſecret and retired correſpondence and communi-
on with him? I ſuppoſe there are ſome that are
here

here, whoſe conſciences beareth them record they do not exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs: and I ſhal only ſay that word, that *Gideon* ſpake in another caſe: *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* Such a ſpirit of formality, ſuch a ſpirit of lazineſs, ſuch a ſpirit of hardneſs, and ſuch a ſpirit of undervaluing of Chriſt. I ſuppoſe, that if there were a Chronicle written of the lives of all the Saints that have been ſince *Adams* days; and the Chriſtians of this time ſhould read over that Chronicle, when they ſhould begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his: and when they ſhould read the life of *Abel*, they muſt put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his: and when they ſhould read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his. O! to which of the Saints can we go? And if ye ſhould call, is there any that would anſwer you, *your life is like mine.*

But to come to the words we told you at the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon them, that there were theſe things concerning the promiſes holden forth in them. 1. The riſe of the promiſe is holden forth in the words, *Whereby*, or as we cleared, the words may be thus rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jeſus Chriſt.

The ſecond thing concerning the promiſes holden forth in the verſe, is, the property of the promiſes, and they are theſe four. 1. That the promiſes are free, holden forth in that word, *whereby are given unto us*: all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant are gifts, and no debt. There is that

ſecond property of the promiſes, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *given*, the gifts & calling of God being without *repentance*. And the third property of the promiſes was, that they were *exceeding great*. And the fourth, that they were *exceeding precious*.

The third thing concerning the promiſes, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth to a Chriſtian by the promiſes, that by them we might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the laſt thing concerning them was, that time when the promiſes were eſpecially accompliſhed, it was then, *when we had eſcaped the pollutions of the world through luſt*.

Now, as for the firſt thing, to wit, the fountain, original, and riſe of the promiſes, which is Jeſus Chriſt, *by whom*. In ſpeaking upon this, we ſhal ſpeak a little unto theſe two. 1. In what reſpects Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain & original of the promiſes: and we conceive he may be ſaid to be ſo. Firſt, becauſe he purchaſed the promiſes unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promiſe in all the everlaſting covenant, but it is the price of the blood of the Son of God: this is clear in *Epheſ.* 2. 12. 13. where ſpeaking of the Gentils that they were ſtrangers unto the covenant of promiſe he ſetteth down in the 13. verſe, the way by which they were brought near unto the covenant; and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his croſs*; and it is clear in *Epheſ.* 3. 6. that the promiſes of the Goſpel *were given unto us in him*; that is, through the purchaſe of him, and his merits; and in 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. where we are ſaid

ſaid *to be bought by his blood*; for the promiſe of Redemption, was the price of blood. Secondly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in this reſpect, that he is the perſon unto whom the promiſes of the covenant are firſt made and through him are made over unto us: this is clear in *Gal.* 3.16. the promiſes were given unto *Abraham*, not unto many ſeeds, but as *unto one*, that is, *Chriſt*: and it is clear from 2 *Tim.* 1. 19. where the promiſes of Grace and Salvation are ſaid to be given unto us *in him before the World was made*. It is true, that the promiſes are not given to Chriſt, conſidered only as the Son of God (for ſo he had no other relation to us then the Father or the holy Ghoſt) but yet they are firſt made to him as the Mediator & *head of his Church*, and as that bleſſed *days-man*, and *King of Saints*, and *the great Lord-keeper of all the rights* of the young heirs of glory: *And we all receive out of his fulneſs, and grace for grace*. Thirdly, there is this reſpect, in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the promiſes: this is clear in 1 *Cor.* 3.12.13. where theſe two are conjoyned, *ye are Chriſts*, and then *all things are yours*. If once a ſoul cloſe with Chriſt in the covenant of promiſe, there is not one promiſe in the Scripture, but he may write this ſuperſcription above it, *This is mine, this is mine*. Fourthly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in regard that he is the perſon that applyeth the promiſes, and maketh us to reſt upon them, and to believe: this *David* did acknowledge in *Pſal.* 119.49. *Remember thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou*

haſt cauſed me to hope: as if *David* ſaid, I had never believed a promiſe, except thou hadſt cauſed me. And it is clear in *Epheſ.* 2. 8. where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the promiſes; it is the royal donation and gift of Chriſt. Fifthly, he may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in that he qualifieth us for the accompliſhment of them. Chriſt give h us ſtrength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promiſe, and Chriſt he infuſeth habitual graces in us, by which we may be helped to exerciſe Faith upon the promiſes; ſo that grant all the Scripture were promiſes, yet if Chriſt did not help us, we would never believe a promiſe, and there would never a promiſe be accompliſhed unto us. Sixthly, the laſt reſpect in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, is, that all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, they have their accompliſhment through him, according to that word in 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *All the promiſes of God are in him, yea, and in him amen:* ſo that ye are to bleſs Chriſt, not only for the giving of the promiſes, but for the accompliſhment of them alſo.

That which ſecondly we ſhal ſpeak to from this, that Chriſt is the fountain of the promiſes, ſhall be to preſs upon Chriſtians theſe three excellent and ſoul-concerning duties. The firſt, that they would not have a light account of the promiſes, ſince they are rivolets and ſtreams that flow from that bleſſed Ocean. O but if a Chriſtian did believe that the promiſe that he hath for his daily bread it was bought with the blood of the ſecond Perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, would he not have

n high account of that promiſe? And let metell ou, it is impoſſible for the promiſes to be in high ccount with you, till once ye reduce them unto heir riſe, and to their fountain. But once know hat all the promiſes are ſweet ſtreams of love, hat have run through the heart of precious Chriſt, and from thence they have flowed unto you: and hen when this is believed, how ſhall ye ſit down and comfort your ſelves in the promiſes, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The ſecond duty that we preſs upon you from this, is, that ſince Chriſt is the fountain and original of promiſes, be much in the application of the promiſes. And here I ſhal ſpeak a little upon theſe three things. 1. A little unto the evidences and marks of thoſe that have a right to apply the promiſes, and ſhal only name unto you theſe few: The firſt is, to be a perſon under convictions of ſenſible need and neceſſity of ſuch a promiſe: have ye conviction of ſuch a neceſſity, then from then ye may infer, I have a right to the promiſes; and are not theſe glad tidings? I know there are ſome that are under ſuch convictions of their ſin, that they think it is boldneſs to apply the promiſes: but I would ſay this unto you, that if ye were under ſenſible convictions of your loſtneſs, you would give a world for an hair of a promiſe whereby to hang: believe it, the exerciſe of misbelief is never at its height, till we would be content to dig through the earth to get a promiſe, & till we were at that, that our ſouls would purſue after them from the one end of the world to the other. And for the grounds of this aſſertion, that

ſenſible

ſenſible neceſſity giveth a right to the promiſe; if ye will look to theſe great promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, are they not given to that Chriſtian that is under a need, *Iſa.* 55. 1. 2. and *Mat.* 11. 28. where the great promiſe of the Goſpel is given out, and the invitation of Jeſus Chriſt, is unto theſe that are *weary & heavy laden*? Chriſt would account it an excellent courteſie, that you would not diſpute, but believe, and that you would look upon your neceſſities, as his call to believe the promiſe. 2. A Perſon that hath an high account of the *Promiſer*, he hath a right to apply the promiſes. Let once your ſoul cloſe with Chriſt by Faith and Love, and then you may with boldneſs cloſe with the promiſes. I confeſs, if we were more in believing the promiſes, we would have a higher and more full eſteem of the Promiſer: would you know the reaſon that Chriſt is not accounted matchleſs, it is becauſe of this, our neceſſities of the promiſes is not alwayes within our ſight, and our exerciſing of faith upon the promiſes is not our daily work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promiſe; that which is born in upon a Chriſtians ſpirit when he is neat God in prayer, and is under moſt ſenſible exerciſe under his own infirmities, he hath readily a right to apply that promiſe: as for inſtance, when a Chriſtian is debarring himſelf out of Chriſt, which is but an unpleaſant exerciſe; to meet with a promiſe born in upon their ſpirit, that giveth them ſome ground of hope, that they apply and reſt upon Chriſt: or when a Chriſtian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet wit

with a word of promiſe born in upon his ſpirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promiſe. 4. There is that evidence, perſons that have a high account of the promiſes, they have a right to apply the promiſes, it is an excellent and moſt concerning work for a Chriſtian to believe the excellency of the promiſes, when he cannot have the actual application of the promiſes. For when once a Chriſtian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlaſting Covenant are matchleſs in his eyes, then that is, *the valey of Achor*, and a door of hope, that ere long Chriſt will apply them. 5. When a Chriſtian hath great delight in the promiſes, when they are ſweet to his taſte, and are the refreſhing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undeniable ſign that he hath right to make uſe of ſuch promiſes. Were your ſouls never refreſhed by reading of the boundleſs covenant of Love, and the ſweet promiſes that are in it? I would have chriſtians marking theſe promiſes that have upholden them in their ſtraits, I would have them marking the promiſes that have been lively to their ſouls, and ſay, This once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the houſe of *my affliction*, and I would have a Chriſtian marking the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, in which he will ſee infinite wiſdom ſhining in ordering the accompliſhment of the promiſes to ſuch a time. And I would have a Chriſtian marking the frame of his own ſpirit, when the promiſes are accompliſhed (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this

ye ſhould find ſuch a reviving and profitable
light in the promiſes, that ſhould give a very
evidence of your right unto them. 6. Laſtly
when a Chriſtian under ſtraits can receive con
lation from no other thing, but all prove Ph
cians of no value and miſerable comforters: w
a Chriſtian is convinced there is no joy to be
under ſuch a croſs, but in the faith of the promi
that is an evidence that this perſon hath a right
the promiſes. I would only ſay this, O belov
in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your under
luing of the promiſes, and your little exerciſe
faith? I would poſe you with this, when la
ſtudied ye to apply any promiſe of the Covena
of Grace? When laſt did ye exerciſe faith upo
any of them? shal I tell you what is the practi
of the moſt part of us, we ſtudy perhaps to app
one promiſe; but for the reſt of the promiſes,
lay them aſide, and do totally neglect them: w
ſtudy to apply the promiſes of Salvation, and
having redemption through Chriſt, but for t
promiſes of Sanctification, for the promiſes
help us to perform duties, for the promiſes to ſup
port us under the croſs, for the promiſes to com
fort us in our way to heaven, for promiſes in re
ference to all ordinary things, we are not much
application of theſe. O but if a Chriſtian were
lieving the promiſes, he might ſit down e
while he is here & ſing one of the ſongs of Zi
though yet but in a ſtrange land.

The ſecond thing that I ſhal ſpeak to upon t
application of the promiſe, ſhal be to propoſe
to you ſome rules that ye would make uſe o

e application of them, I ſhall name unto you
eſe

Firſt, ſtudy theſe four things, one is the faith-
lneſs and truth of the promiſes, that ſuch a
ing is the ſaying of him that is *the faithful wit-*
eß, and Amen: This was the practiſe of *Paul*,
Tim. 1. 15. the way how he was brought to
ake application of the promiſe, was, 1. By laying
own that concluſion, this is a faithful ſaying;
d *Rev.* 22. from the beginning of the 6. verſe,
hen there are great promiſes made, and much
oken to the commendation of heaven, this is
joyned in the 6. verſ *theſe are the faithful and*
ue ſayings of God; as if *John* had ſaid, all that I
ve ſpoken concerning heaven, will be to no
rp ſe except ye believe the truth of the pro-
iſes; and this was the practiſe of *David*, 2 Sam.
28 *Thy words are truth, O Lord*; he ſubjoyn-
h this unto the actual application of the promi-
. 2. Study the ſweetneſs and excellency of the
omiſes, this was the practiſe of *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1.
. *This is a faithful ſaying*, and then he ſubjoyn-
h, *and worthy of all acceptation*, and this was the
actiſe of *David*, Pſalm 119. 72. *I have eſteemed*
e laws of thy mouth better then thouſands of gold
ſilver: O ſuch an opinion, to eſteem the pro-
iſes better then thouſands of gold! It is hetro-
x amongſt the moſt part of you, that preſer the
rld before the promiſes of the covenant: and it
s his practiſe, *verſ.* 103 and *verſ.* 162. *I rejoyce*
thy word, as one that findeth great ſpoil: he had
igher account of the promiſes, then to divide
ſpoil after war. 3. Let the Chriſtian ſtudy the

neceſſity

neceſſity that he hath of the promiſe, that the
is no way of winning above that neceſſity, but t
cloſing with the promiſe, and laying hold upon
4. Laſtly, a Chriſtian would ſtudy the ſuitabl
neſs that is in the promiſe to anſwer their nece
ties, that if they be under need, there is a precio
way of remedy manifeſted unto them by theſe.
The ſecond rule that we would preſcribe in t
application of the promiſes is, that ye do not e
pect ſenſible comforts immediatly after ye ha
believed the promiſe: a Chriſtian may apply t
promiſes, and yet want the joy and ſweetneſs th
is in them. This is clear, Pſalm 119. 25. *My ſo
cleaveth unto the duſt.* There he is under mu
anxiety and much ſorrow; and yet he is a belie
of the promiſes in the mean time, as the wo
following do declare, *quicken me according to t
word*, he layeth claim to the promiſe, and thi
clear in the 81. verſe of that Pſalm, *My ſoul d
faint within me*: there is much exerciſe of ſorro
and yet he is a believer in the promiſe, *but I ho
in thy word*, a Chriſtian after he hath belie
the promiſe, he would put a blaok in Chri
hand concerning the ſweetneſs of the promiſes
be made out in its own time. What is ſenſe? i
not the precious indulgence of Chriſt that he
veth to his own? I would preſs this upon yo
propheſie nothing before your believing of th
promiſes, but having believed, ye may ſurely p
pheſie that the promiſe ſhal be accompliſhe
its own time, and the word that he hath ſpok
ſhal certainly come to paſs: but as for ſenſe,
for quickning, as for comforting, as for revi

e muſt put a blank in the hand of Chriſt, to di-penſe theſe things to you as he ſeeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the pro-iſes, is, that you do not build your faith upon his, that the promiſes ſhal be accompliſhed, be-auſe probabilities and reaſon ſeem to ſay the hing: I would ſay this to a Chriſtian, that ye ay oftentimes ſuſpect the promiſe is not near to e accompliſhed, when reaſon ſaith, *Behold the ord of the Lord cometh*, and that oftentimes the ord is nearer when we begin to paſs a conclu-on, the word is not at hand, and the time of the ccompliſhment of the promiſe is not near: Cer-inly many times before Chriſt accompliſh the romiſes, he will learn us to be living above ſenſe nd reaſon, and he will have reaſon to ſubmit to aith, and he will have probabilities to contradict he accompliſhment of the promiſe; and when robabilities are furtheſt away, that is his time to ork: this is clear in theſe two ſignal deliverances f the people of *Iſrael* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4. 5. and *Ezek.* 37. at the beginning. nd therefore as a Chriſtian would not quite his rip of the promiſes, becauſe diſpenſations ſeem o contradict the accompliſhment of the promiſe, nd ſome time cryeth out; *Why art thou become nto me as a liar, & as waters that fail?* So on the ther hand, ye are to build your faith upon the romiſes, and not upon diſpenſations, even when favourable; ſeeing that we know the way that Chriſt taketh many times to accompliſh the pro-iſes, is by contrary means to our apprehenſion: *His paths are in the whirle wind, and his footſteps*

are

are not known. And may we not cry out, Wh
can take up the wayes of God, whose waves
more subtile then *the way of an Eagle in the air,*
the way of a Serpent upon the rock, or the way
Ship in the sea, &c.

The fourth rule that we would prescribe un
you in the application of the promises, is, that
would close absolutely with the promises, I me
without limiting the only One There is a lim
ted closing with the promise, which is the freque
exercise of our hearts; we will close with the pr
mise, but with this restraint laid upon Chri
That whensoever we begin to believe the pr
mises, all things might go as we desire: & this
the great occasion that we do so frequently reje
our confidence, & do refuse our hope when G
doth not answer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, we give you this rule, that ye would ey
Christ much in the application of the promise
There is a three fold sight of Christ that a Chr
stian should have when he applyeth the promise
a Christian should have a sight of the boundle
and condescending love of Christ, that so he m
be constrained to hope, and may be constrain
to love. 2. A Christian should eye the faithfu
ness and unchangeableness of Christ, that wh
his blessed lips have spoken, *he will also do,* a
what he hath said, he will likewise bring to pa
And 3. in the application of the promises he m
eye the Omnipotency of Christ, that what
hath said, he is able to bring to pass. And, O wh
shal we have occasion to sing that song, *what h*
God wrought for us, which was the song that
la

am ſung, who yet was but a prophane wretch. 6. There is this rule that we would preſcribe to you in the application of the promiſes, that Chriſtian after he hath applyed them, he would e much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accomliſhment of thoſe promiſes, this was the practiſe *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. When God is paſſing ecious promiſes, *David* doth ſubjoyn that ord, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray is prayer*: And we ſee in *Ezek* 36. 37 all alngs that chap. God is paſſing moſt excellent omiſes; and yet in *verſ.* 37. this is ſubjoyned, *or all theſe things, I will be enquired of the houſe Iſrael*, And in *Jer.* 29 10. and 12. where the ne is coming, when God would accompliſh his *od word*, (as he ſpeaketh) that is ſubjoyned in *verſ.* 12. *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ſeek after me*: And in *Dan*, 9. 2. 3. when *Daniel* knew that e promiſe was near the time of its accompliſhſent, then he ſet *himſelf for prayer and ſupplicaon to ſeek the face of God*. I would ſay theſe ſe three words unto a Chriſtian, the ſmalleſt mercy leat a Chriſtian meeteth with, if he can call it muel, that is *the ſon of prayer* and if ye can call it ſaac, that is, *The child of promiſe*, he may then, d doth ordinarily receive much conſolation in at mercy. O but a mercy flowing to a Chriſtithorow a promiſe, if it were but a drink of cold ter, and a piece of brown bread; it will be more cellent chear, then all the dainties of the Kings the earth. O but to eat and drink, taking theſe gs as the accompliſhment of the promiſes, would make us eat our bread, *with ſingleneſs*

of

of heart, and much chearfulneſs. And there is
ſecondly, I would ſay unto you, when a pro
is accompliſhed, and a Chriſtian is not muc
the exerciſe of prayer in the accompliſhmen
it, one to a hundred if he looſe not the ſancti
uſe of the accompliſhment of that promiſe.
know ye not that a promiſe when it is acc
pliſhed, may be a curſe to a Chriſtian. That w
is moſt terrible, Mal. 2. 2. *I will curſe your b
ſings.* And the laſt word that I would ſay a
this, is, That a Chriſtian who believeth the p
miſes, notwithſtanding that diſpenſations ſeem
contradict is, that promiſe ſhal be made mo
freſhful unto his ſpirit, when it is accompliſh
O but a Chriſtian that never had much jealou
nor much ſtaggering about the accompliſhm
of the promiſe, when it cometh, it will be n
freſhful unto him: And believe it, there is
one hours entertainment of jealouſie about
accompliſhment of the promiſe, but it will
pair the ſweetnes of the promiſe when it is
complished, except in ſo far, that the tranſc
dent and free love of Chriſt is ſeen in the acco
pliſhment of them, notwithſtanding of our
belief.

The laſt rule that I shal offer, a Chriſtia
his application of the promiſes, when ye m
with objections that ye cannot anſwer, but
do ſilence you, I will tell you what ye shoul
with them miskeo theſe objections, and lay t
by. This was the practiſe of believing *Abrah*
Rom. 4. 9. *He conſidered not his own body b
weak and the deadneſs of Sarahs womb.* The w

ſs of his own body, and the deadneſs of *Sarahs* omb, were ſo ſtrong objections in the way of e accomplishment of the promiſes, that he ould not anſwer them, and the way he taketh to fute them was, *He did not conſider them*, as it ere he forgot theſe objections and went about s duty. The third thing that we shal ſpeak to, elation to the application of the promiſes shal ſomewhat for helping a Chriſtian tha is ſtanding at too great a diſtance to get the promiſes plied.

Firſt, a Chriſtian would be much in the ſtudy theſe experiences of the faithfulneſs of God, d what others have met with. When ye begin apply a promiſe, ye may be helped in the faith applying promiſes, by beholding theſe great cords of the faithfulneſs of God that are extant. his was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, *uke* 1. 36. where helping her to believe that omiſe, that of her ſhould be born the Meſſiah; is is the way that he ſtrengtheneth her, *Thy cou- Elizabeth is now with Child, and hath gone ſix oneths, even ſhe that was called barren.* And I all only name theſe two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and ſtrengthen ou to believe the promiſes upon this account. here is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41. and 51. It is moſt remarkable ſaying, *at the end of the four ndreth and thirty years, on the ſame very day*, here was not one day miſſed after the time that as ſet was accomplished) *in that ſame very day y came out*, & this is marked in *verſ*, 51. again. nd there is that word 1 *Kings* 8. 56. where *Solo-*

mon,

mon, when he is ſinging moſt ſweetly to God, taketh obſervation of this, *Lo*, ſaith he, *there is not failed one word that God hath ſpoken to his ſervant* Moſes.

Secondly, ye would be much in the conſideration of your own experiences, that you have the accompliſhment of promiſes formerly. It was *Davids* way that he took to ſtrengthen himſelf to believe the promiſe: *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumciſed Philiſtine.* 1 *Sam.* 17. 35. and 37. 46 And this was the practiſe of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17. 18. *God hath delivered me from that cruel Lion.* And from thence he ſubjoyneth, *& the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*: And this was his practiſe, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. where theſe three things are ſweetly knit together, *God hath delivered me, doth deliver me, and he shal deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you: O believe the promiſe, and do not call in queſtion his faithfulneſs.

Thirdly, there is that help; that ye ſtudy much the excellency of the promiſes, that is the most noble & excellent way to move you to apply the promiſes according to that word, *Pſal* 119 111. *I have made thy teſtimonies mine heritage for ever*, and the ground of it is that, *Becauſe they are the rejoycing of my heart.* The ſweetneſs of the promiſes would engage our heart to apply them.

And there is that fourth help, A Chriſtian would ſtudy the omnipotency of God, that ſo he may be helped to believe and apply the promiſe

ſs is clear in *Zech.* 12. 1. where God going to
ſs many excellent promiſes, he uſhers in that
ſcourſe with high and majeſtick deſcriptions of
s power, in that he *ſtretcheth forth the Heavens,*
d layeth the foundation of the Earth, & formeth
e ſpirit of man within him. And this was the pra-
ſe of *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 21. the way how he
me to believe the promiſe, *He counted him able*
t had made it, that he might perform it.

Fifthly, for your help in applying of the pro-
ſes, ſtudy much the unchangeableneſs of
riſt, and his faithfulneſs, know that he is the
me yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. This
s the way that *Sarah* came to the faith of the
omiſes, *Heb.* 11. 11. *She believed*, and the
und of it, is, that *she judged him faithful that*
d promiſed. There is not one act of misbeliet
t a Chriſtian falleth into, but it ſaith, that God
ot faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the laſt duty that we would preſs from
point, that Chriſt is the fountain of the pro-
ſes, is that we may have an high eſteem of the
omiſer; even of Jeſus Chriſt, *in whom they are*
and Amen: And I ſhal cloſe all at this time
h this, are there not many here, that have no
ect unto him who is that *faithful witneſs and*
men; who hath promiſed us *himſelf and all*
gs: and if ye will not take with the challenge,
your hearts but anſwer theſe two or three
gs. 1. Hath not the loſs of things in the world
ted your heart more, then ever abſence from
iſt did? Hath it not? And can ſuch a Soul
I have an high account of the promiſer? Is

it possible, that these that will mourn more u
der the absence of their Idols, then for the wa
of him, that they can have an high account of J
sus Christ? I am perswaded of this, that the
are some Merchants, that the loss of their goo
at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nigh
rest, and yet absence from Christ never did dive
them from their sleep one hour. O when d
love to find out Jesus Christ, and to enjoy his fe
lowship, make you rise up in the silent watch
of the night, and to pursue after him? 2. Ha
not your Souls delighted more on the enjoym
of the things of a World, then ever they did af
the enjoyment of Christ? Is not this true, th
the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver a
gold hath affected your hearts more with joy th
ever Christ did? And have you a high effec
of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight
entertain fellowship and communion with t
Promiser; is this true? when went you to yo
prayer, but ye wearied ere ye went away? A
have ye a high account of the Promiser? Is
that the language of your hearts; *O when sh*
the Sabbath be over? and when shal the new M
be gone, that I may pursue after my Idols
would pose you with this, if there were no
to take notice of you, would you not slight sec
prayer? Would you not slight Family praye
We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know th
are Atheists here, that would love to go to H
ven without faith, love, prayer, and repentan
they would love to go to Heaven by a way
never one went before them. And now I

ſay but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promiſe; and have the bleſſed expectation of Heaven, what ever the World do, eſteem ye highly of him: O remember and comfort your ſelves in the thoughts of the bleſſed day when Chriſt (after he hath paſt the Sentence of condemnation upon the wicked) ſhal go in upon the head of the troups of the firſt born, he shall walk in before us through the Ports of the new *Jeruſalem*, having crowns of immortal glory upon his head, and then ſhall follow after him his Angels, and then ſhall follow after him the bleſſed company of the firſt-born, every one having the harps of God in their hand, and they ſhal be ſinging as they enter in thorow the ports of the City, *Hallelujah, to him that was dead, and is alive, and now liveth for evermore.* O to believe that day, when firſt we ſhal enter in thorow the ſtreets of the new *Jeruſalem*, when we ſhal be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our head! O ſuch a day, if it were believed, might make us often ſhake our glaſs, and *ſtretch out our neck* (as the word is *Rom.* 8. 19.) till once we ſaw that bleſſed day were approaching to us! There is no wearying in heaven, the promiſes are now accompliſhed unto them, & they are inheriting the promiſes. When ſhal that word be accompliſhed? or when ſhal we have occaſion to ſay it? *Mark* 1. 37. *Behold, all men ſeek after thee*; the word that theſe Diſciples ſpake to Chriſt. O ſtudy to love him: ſtudy to believe on him: for be perſwaded he is upon his way. And I ſhal ſay no more but this, that all the promiſes that are within the bonds

of this everlasting covenant, they are *yea* & *amen* in an imbraced Christ, and laid hold on by faith. So I say, all the curses that are in *Deut.* 26.27.28 and all the curses that are within the volume of the book of this covenant, they shal be *yea* and *Amen*, in a despised Christ, and not laid hold upon by faith.

SERMON III.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust.*

SOmetimes the soul of a Christian doth move in the paths of God, and in the ways toward *Zion, as the chariots of Aminadab*, when they are under the soul-enliving and quickening influences of heaven: And sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in those blessed paths, as *Pharoahs* Chariots, *they drive most heavily*, when there is a cloud betwixt the precious face of Christ and them: and we conceive that sound and spiritual exercise of faith upon the promises, would make Christians motion more swift towards Heaven. We grant Christ hath three different wayes of guiding sons and daughters to glory: there are some that Christ carrieth to heaven in a Chariot paved with love, that all alongs their life they are living within sight of that promised land, and are taken up with the refreshing fore-tasts of the heavenly joys; such a one was *Enoch*, who spent his dayes in walking with God: there are some that

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Chriſt guideth to heaven in a chariot that is drawn with ſpeckled horſes, they have mixed diſpenſations of ſorrow and of joy attending them in their walk, they have a winter and a ſummer, they have night and a day, and ſuch a one was *Job* 3. There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under diſtracting terrors of the moſt High, and are living perpetually to their own apprehenſions upon the borders of Hell, & ſuch a one was *Heman*, whom Chriſt thus did guide to heaven: however, if we ſhal go there, we need not much diſpute the way how we came, *for he doth all things well*. And upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding Souls unto everlaſting torments; there are ſome that Satan carrieth to Hell in a Chariot of deluſions, making them believe that they are ſtill going to Heaven, and ſuch are the Hypocrites in *Sion*: and I ſhall ſay, I think that Chariot was never filled, as it is in thoſe dayes. O fear that anxious diſappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An Hypocrite hath ſtrong hopes, hath ſtrong idols, and he hath ſtrong deluſions, theſe are his three attendants. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to Hell in a Chariot of prophanity and ignorance of God, *whoſe judgement goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of civility, whoſe Religion ſtands in this *concerning the letter of the law to be blameleſs*. And certainly believing of the promiſes, and ſtudying to exerciſe faith upon them, is that which might prevent

many of theſe damnable ſoul-deſtroying and
murthering deluſions that are within ſome of our
breaſts.

There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Chriſt he is called precious, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious Faith with us*: and the promiſes they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and faith (as it were) hath two bleſſed eyes, by one of theſe it beholdeth Chriſt, and by another of theſe it beholdeth the promiſes, & fixeth it ſelf upon them. O Chriſtians and expectants of heaven, would ye know what is the riſe of the ſad things that have befallen you in theſe days? It is this in ſhort, ye believe not the promiſes. O Chriſtians, what is the reaſon that ye carry not your croſſes with patience, it is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes by the which your ſoul muſt be upholden in the day of your affliction. O Chriſtian, what is the riſe of your little mortification? Is it not becauſe ye believe not the promiſes: for by them ye ſhould *be made partakers of the divine nature*? O Chriſtian, what is the ground that ye pray ſo little, and that ye pray with ſo little ſucceſs? It is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes. A Chriſtian when he goeth to pray, he ſhould take theſe two things along; 1. The ſenſible convictions of his neceſſities: And 2. the precious promiſes that is given to anſwer that neceſſity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other faith.

Are not there ſome here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promiſe, and that maketh you

pray

pray to ſo little purpoſe? O Chriſtian, what is the reaſon of your ſo much ſorrow, & of your little ſpiritual comfort? It is, that ye believe not the promiſes: It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, becauſe ye exerciſe not faith upon the precious promiſes of God. I think without wronging you, or any that are here; I doubt much if ever Chriſtians had ſuch hearts as the moſt part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praiſe: both are alike myſteries unto them: what a heart is that, O Chriſtian, that can neither believe promiſes, believe threatnings, nor obey commands; what a heart is that, that can neither ſorrow for ſin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart is that can neither love Chriſt when he is preſent, nor can they long for Chriſt when he is abſent? and what a heart is that, O Chriſtian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not ſuch hearts with us, even with us that are here this day?

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we ſpake a little to the firſt thing in them, which was the riſe and original of the promiſes, holden forth in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom*.

The ſecond thing in the words, was the properties of the promiſes, and we told you that there were theſe four holden forth in the words. The firſt property of the promiſes is, that they *are free*, which is imported in that word, *are given*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence ye will ſee that oft-times the tenor of the Covenant

of Grace runs upon that ſtrain, *I will give you*, a
is clear, Jer. 32. 29. *I will give you one heart*, an
Ezek. 36. 26. *I will give you a new heart*, an
Ezek. 11. 9. *I will give you*; it is the ſtrain of th
language of the Covenant of Grace, *to give*.

Now in ſpeaking upon this firſt property
the promiſes; to wit, *their freedom*, I ſhal ſpea
a little unto theſe two, the firſt thing ſhal be t
point out unto you theſe two: the firſt thing ſha
be to point out unto you the way how a Chriſti
an may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the free
dom of the promiſes, and then I ſhal from thenc
preſs ſomed uties.

And in ſhort, as to the firſt, we conceive tha
a Chriſtian may win unto the diſtinct uptakin
of the freedom of the promiſes, by theſe conſide
rations. 1. Let a Chriſtian caſt his eye upon the
ſweet riſe, and ſpring or fountain of the promiſes,
and there ye will ſee their freedom ſhinning mo
clear: for what is the fountain of the promiſes?
Is it not the boundleſs and everlaſting love of
Chriſt? this is clear in *Deut.* 7. 8. where God
giving a reaſon of all the great things that he had
performed for them, he ſetteth down the riſe of
it, *Becauſe I have loved you*, there being no reaſon
of love, but love: and it is clear in 2 *Sam.* 7. 2.
where *David* having received many precious pro-
miſes, he ſetteth down the riſe of all theſe in that
verſe, *for thy words ſake*, ſaith he, *and according
to thine own heart, haſt thou done all theſe things to
make them known to thy ſervant*. And it is clear,
16. 8 where God calleth the time of entering in-
to Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love

it

it was eminently ſhining in that day when God did condeſcend to Covenant with them: and hence ye ſee in Scripture, that the promiſes they are called by that name of *mercy*, Micah 7. 20. *to perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the *promiſes*, and they are ſo called, becauſe mercy and boundleſs love is the ſole fountain and ſpring of all theſe promiſes. Secondly, conſider the perſons, who have right to make uſe of the promiſes. Muſt not the promiſes be free when the proclamation is upon theſe terms, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever will; let him come*, there is nothing to give you a right to the promiſes, but only a willingneſs to embrace them, if ye will, ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedom of the promiſes in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promiſe, Chriſt giveth to the believer ſtrength to perform that coodition: It is known that faith is the condition of the promiſes; and it is certain Chriſt giveth a Believer that condition, as well as he giveth him the promiſe, Phil. 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*, and Epeſ. 2. 8. *It is the gift of God.* It is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to perform the condition, except Chriſt who is ſurety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the time when the promiſes are accompliſhed, it is often at ſuch a time, when the Chriſtian hath been, and is under no very ſpiritual frame. Hence ye will ſee in *Ezek.* 16. 60, 61. that when the promiſes are accompliſhed, then God requireth *confuſion and blushing of face*, becauſe of their former ways, and *Ezek.* 36. 31. when the

promiſes are accompliſhed, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them *to remember their own evil wayes, and their doings that were not good*; yea, he will have them & all the World to know, *it is not for their ſakes that he doth this*; therefore he commandeth them to *be aſhamed & confounded for their own wayes*, or the poſture they were in when he accompliſhed his promiſe. And if there were no other thing to ſpeak the freedom of the promiſes, but the tryſting of the accompliſhment of them with ſuch a frame, it were more then ſufficient. But beſides this, ſee *Davids* practiſe, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. he readeth the freedom of the promiſes from his own imperfections, *What am I* (ſaith he) *and what is my fathers houſe, that thou ſhouldſt have brought me hither to?* And even in the ſame Text, there is an Emphaſis in that word, *to us, whereby are given to us*, as if the Apoſtle did ſay, to prove that the promiſes are gifts: I can bring no other argument ſo ſtrong as this, *They are given to us*. Fifthly, ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye will conſider and take up the infinite fulneſs and alſufficiency of the *Promiſer*, that there is nothing without himſelf that can perſwade him to give ſuch promiſes. Hence ye will ſee that in *Gen.* 17. 1. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it ſtill in the frontiſpiece of the Covenant, *I am God al-ſufficient*, as it were, to put off all thoughts of merit that *Abraham* might have, & that *Abraham* might be perſwaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himſelf, that could be the ground and riſe of ſuch promiſes. And

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here is that, laſtly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the greatneſs of the promiſes: if they were of a low nature, then were it leſs to be wondered, if merit ſhould come in to plead for it ſelf. But when a Chriſtian ſhal compare himſelf, and the greatneſs of the promiſes together, he cannot but then ſing that bleſſed ſong, *Theſe are the gifts, donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?*

Now the ſecond thing that we purpoſe to ſpeak to is, to preſs ſome duties upon you from this, that the promiſes are free, and we ſhal lay before you theſe three. The firſt, That ſince the promiſes of God are free, then as ye would not deſtroy your own ſouls, be much in making uſe and application of the promiſes: Are not the promiſes your life? Did not all the Saints that went to Heaven before us, go to Heaven, living upon the promiſes? There was not a ſtep of *Abrahams* life, but he walked with a promiſe in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himſelf from the promiſes: and I ſhal remove theſe two miſtakes that are incident to Chriſtians in the application of the promiſes, even from this ground, that they are free.

The firſt is this, There are ſome Chriſtians that will not apply the promiſes, becauſe they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baſeneſs: ſo that when we preſs you to believe the promiſes, ye reject this counſel, becauſe ye conſult with your own infirmities. This was the practiſe of *David*, *Pſalm* 22.4. *Our fathers*

fathers truſted in thee, they truſted, and were deli-
vered: but he durſt not in the 6. verſe. *But I am*
a worm, and not a man; I am a reproach among
the people. And it is the ſame divinity that is in
theſe days, when we preſs you to believe the pro-
miſes, becauſe of the great cloud of witneſſes that
have gone before you, that believed the promiſes.
O ſay ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I
would believe the promiſes; but truly *David*
ſaid that ſame, that lived before you, if I were
like my fathers, I would believe the promiſes;
but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I
would ſay to you theſe two words. 1. Are ye in-
ferior or ſhort unto *David* in holineſs, or neceſſi-
ties? We do not queſtion, but all of you will
anſwer; we are not inferior to *David* in neceſſities,
but in holineſs; Then ſay we, if ye be not inferior
or to *David* in neceſſities, then make uſe of the
promiſes: for as we cleared the laſt day, neceſſity
giveth a right in making uſe of the promiſes. 2. I
would ſay, I am certainly perſwaded, that ſenſible
neeeſſity would cut ſhort many of our formal de-
bates, in cloſing with the promiſes: neceſſities
as ye uſe to ſpeak, hath no law, and neceſſity hath
no manners. Let me ſay that to you who will
not cloſe with the promiſes, that if ye were un-
der ſenſible neceſſity, if Chriſt ſhould forbid you
to cloſe with ſuch a promiſe, ye would cloſe with
it, though he forbid you, as the woman of *Canaan*
did: there is nothing but ſenſible neceſſity will
overcome it: neceſſity never diſputs its right, for
it goeth over the belly of ſuch a diſpute, it pre-
ſently maketh uſe of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly,

Secondly, there is that other mistake amongst Christians in believing the promises, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promises, and therefore they dare not believe the promise, especially that promise of closing with Christ: they think they are not under such a deep measure of humiliation, of sorrow for sin, nor under such lively apprehensions of the excellency of Christ. And I shal say but these six things unto those that will not close with Christ, because they want qualifications, or at least have not these qualifications after such a way. First, Let me tell thee (O Christian that thus disputes) go between the first steps of a Christians way to Heaven and the last; and see if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written; behold, here lieth a man or a woman that came to Christ to imbrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold such a grave as this? And why then do ye so much dispute? Will ye take a trial of Christ whether he will refuse you if ye come, and if he shal refuse you, sure I am, he will do that which he never did to any before you. The second thing I would say to such, that the want of such degrees of such things, ought not to be a ground of your not closing with Christ, for if ye had these qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain that same dispute that ye do now: for when we desire you to close with Christ, ye answer, that your sorrow is not come to such a hight as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to such a hight, as ye pitch for your self to come to. O Christian, if ye come to ten times more, and yet

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ten times more, ye would have that same diſpute then which ye have now: and the ground of it is this, the more that a Chriſtian hath real ſorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehenſion, that he hath no ſorrow. Thirdly, if ye want the qualifications that are required in thoſe that ſhould cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of promiſe, then come to Chriſt to get theſe qualifications. I would only ask at you, think you to ſpin ſorrow for ſin out of your own hearts? Think ye to ſpin humiliation for ſin out of theſe wretched breaſts of yours? ye muſt come to Chriſt for ſorrow, as well as ye come to Chriſt for life. Fourthly, all the qualifications that are annexed unto the promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt, and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of thoſe that ought to come. Ye read ſuch a command as that, *Come unto me, all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O ſay ye, I am not weary, I am not under the burden of ſin, therefore I cannot come. I will tell you what is the meaning of that command; Chriſt inviteth thoſe who have the greateſt unwillingneſs, to come and get willingneſs: But withal, it ſhoweth this, none will come to get reſt from Chriſt, but theſe that are firſt weary: and that this is the Lords method of working, firſt to make weary, and then to eaſe, but no ſuch matter in his word, that firſt we muſt have a wearineſs of our own making, or elſe he will not receive us: Now, but when ye come, ye will be weary, and he will receive you. Fifthly, let me ſay to you who thus diſputes,

diſputes, make your want of qualifications the very ground of your cloſing with Chriſt, I ſhall but in three places let you ſee this ſtrange arguing of faith in cloſing with the promiſes: there is that in *Pſal.* 40. 11. 12. *Let thy truth continually preſerve me*; that is, let thy promiſes be accompliſhed and made lively unto me, which are my preſervation: and would ye know the ground & reaſon that he annexeth unto this; for, ſaith he, *Innumerable evils hath compaſſed me about; they have taken ſuch hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his very want of qualifications the ground of his cloſing with the promiſes, and ſeeking the accompliſhment of it. And there is that ſecond expreſſion which is moſt wonderfull, in *Pſalm* 25. 11. *David* prayeth for the accompliſhment of that promiſe: *pardon my ſin*, upon that ſame very account, *becauſe it is great.* And I ſhall give you a third place in which the arguing of faith is moſt myſterious, *Exod.* 33. 3. compared with *Exod.* 34. 9. In the firſt place, God denieth the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *of going up amongſt that people.* And the ground he giveth of it is, *becauſe*, ſaith he, *ye are a ſtiff-necked people.* And *cha.* 34. *verſ.* 9. when *Moſes* is praying for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, that *God would go up amongſt them:* he taketh that ſame very argument out of the mouth of God: Go up amongſt us; *for*, ſaith he, *we are a ſtiff-necked people.* God ſaid he would not go up, becauſe they were a ſtiff-necked people, and *Moſes* deſireth him to go up, becauſe of this. And there is this, laſtly, that we would ſay to you that

ſo

ſo much diſpute: If ye would have theſe qualifications that ye want, ye would ſtudy to cloſe with Chriſt by faith: Would ye have ſorrow for ſin? then believe. Would ye have high thoughts of Chriſt? then believe. Would ye have humiliation? then believe: for believing is a mother grace unto all theſe.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration that the promiſes are free, is, that when the promiſes are given to you and are accompliſhed, ye would ſtudy to be denyed to any merit in your ſelves, which ye may ſuppoſe to be the riſe of the giving or accompliſhment of theſe promiſes. There is nothing that a Chriſtian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that tryſteth a Chriſtian, but it is the fruit of infinit love: there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Chriſt, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not the leaſt degree of hatred againſt ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love, there is not the leaſt promiſe that is accompliſhed unto you, but it is the fruit of infinite love: ſo that upon all our receipts from God, there is reaſon to ſing that ſong, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory.* And therefore I would preſs this upon you. O Chriſtian! reduce all your merits unto the fountain, and there ſit down and pen Songs of everlaſting praiſe to him Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promiſe, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels & tender heart of Chriſt: his heart is the fountain of

all

all his mercies: & they ſweetly ſtream out of that precious fountain, ſo that if he had no other thing to commend your mercy from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Chriſt, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and ſolace your ſelves with it.

The laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is this, ye would be ſtudying to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt, that is promiſed and freely holden out to you in the Goſpel. O ſinner of eighty years old! O ſinner of ſixty years old! O Atheiſt of fourty years old! And, O ſinner of twenty years old, and downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt, to imbrace Chriſt freely offered in the promiſe; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that noble *plant of renown*, by that everlaſting love that dwelt in his precious heart, by all the ſufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the bleſſings, and joyes of Heaven, and by that love that ye owe to your precious and immortal ſouls, that ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to you in this Chriſt. And for the further preſſing of this, and for clearing of the way of your cloſing with him, I ſhall firſt propoſe four precious Goſpel-myſteries, and ſweet agreeing contradictions (if ſo we may ſpeak) held forth in Scripture.

1 *Come and buy Chriſt, and yet buy without money*; that is, come and receive Chriſt, and ye ſhal have as unqueſtionable a right to him, as if ye had bought him, that is *to buy without money*, ye have nothing to commend you to Chriſt, but neceſſities, and neceſſities biddeth you go, & Chriſt bid-

deth

deth you come? why then will ye sit this call
2. What a Gospel-mystery is that, *ye are to buy Christ, and yet Christ is above price?* there is no thing that we can give to buy that *pearl of greatest price*, and yet we must buy him: then the meaning is, come and buy Christ by faith; and by forsaking of your idols: this is all the price that he doth require for himself; and so he requireth nothing of you but what he himself doth give, and what is both your duty and advantage to forsake and which is no gain for him to receive. Christ is not inriched by your hearts, and by giving of your consent to him. 3. This is a Gospel-mystery, that *we are to buy without money, and without price, and yet to buy with a price*; according to that word, *Prov.* 17.17. there is a price put in the hand of fools, to buy wisdom; & what is the meaning of that, *to buy with price, and to buy without price?* It is in short this, though Christ be offered to you in the Gospel-freely, ye must not sit down but be active in closing with him. What is the price that Christ requireth of you? Even this that ye would forsake your fool-destroying idol and that ye would forsake your former evil ways and take hold of the present opportunitie for imbracing him. And, O! cursed shal that heart be that will not imbrace Christ. O! but to have him one hour in our arms, it were well worth to thousand eternities of the enjoyments of all this that are here below: Ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breasts*. O but a sight of him the now is the eternal ravishment of all that are

bow

bove, would tranſport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above all expreſſion! Fourthly, there is that Goſpel-miſtery by which we would preſs you to imbrace Chriſt. A *Chriſtian muſt buy Chriſt, and yet he muſt have him freely.* Is there not an inconſiſtence, do you ſuppoſe, between buying and having freely? But I would ſay this to clear it, Chriſt is both the feller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer. Chriſt he preſenteth himſelf unto your hearts, and he deſireth to ſell himſelf, and he perſwadeth & freely enableth you to buy him. I will tell you what Chriſt doth he ſtandeth without our hearts, and within our hearts: he ſtandeth without and knocketh by the Word; and he ſtandeth within, and openeth by his Spirit: Chriſt he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The ſecond thing I ſhall ſay to perſwade your hearts to take Chriſt freely promiſed and offered unto you, ſhal be this, Will ye conſider that there is willingneſs in the heart of Chriſt to take you. I ſhall give you theſe ſix things that ſpeaketh out Chriſts willingneſs to receive you. Firſt, doth not he command you to come and receive him? and if you could multiply objections throughout eternity, why ye ſhould not cloſe with Chriſt, ye may cut them all aſunder with his knife, *This is his Commandment*: And doth he not command you in Matth. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour:* And Iſai. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters.* Secondly, He doth regrate and keeply reſent it that ye will not come. I think

Chriſt

Chriſt never wept ſo bitterly, as that day wh
he weeped over Jeruſalem, that they would n
imbrace him, Luke 19. 41. *If thou, even thou*
leaſt, *in this thy day, had known theſe things th*
belong unto thy peace; And joh. 5. 40. *Ye will n*
come unto me that ye might have life. O what thi
ye can be the riſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould ſo
row, becauſe ye will not give up your hearts
him? doth he increaſe his gain when ye give hi
your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endu
that madneſs in you, that ye ſhould forſake yo
only gain. Thirdly, Would you do Chriſt a jo
ful turn, and make his heart glad? Imbrace hi
This is clear, *Luke* 15. 5. that when he finde
the ſheep that is going aſtray, *He returneth rejo*
ing. Fourthly, I ſay more unto you, would
make all the Perſons of the bleſſed Trinity to
joyce, would ye make all the Angels of Heav
to ſing, would ye make all the Saints that
round about the Throne to exalt for joy; th
give your hearts up to Chriſt, and cloſe with h
in the Covenant of promiſe; according to th
word, *Song* 6. laſt. v. *Return, return, O Shulam*
return, return, that we may look upon thee. Fo
times that command is repeated, *return*, and t
great argument with which he backeth it, is, Th
all the Perſons of the Trinity may rejoyce, *Th*
we may look upon thee. Fourthly, conſider but ho
he hath condeſcended to give himſelf at a very l
rate: What will ye give for Chriſt? O
ners, what will ye give for him? Would ye g
the World for Chriſt? I will tell you what ye
get Chriſt for, ye will get him for a very look,

5. 22. *Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth;* nd think ye not that this is a matchleſs mercy, at the thirty three years ſufferings of Chriſt, all e pains and tortures of the heart, his being un- r the unſupportable wrath of an offended God, e fruit of all that ſhould be yours for a look, ill ye deny that to Chriſt? Oh, do ye ever think find a more down coming market? Yea, fifth- , doth not this ſpeak an admirable willingneſs have you, he is to give you that look. It is im- ſſible for theſe curſed eyes of ours, ever to give ecious Chriſt a look, and therefore he hath pro- iſed to give that to us, that we may give to him ech. 12.10. *They ſhall look to me*, that very look are to get from Chriſt, and ye ſee it is within e compaſs of a promiſe. Laſtly That ſpeaketh hriſts willingneſs to receive and take you, that e doth not take the firſt refuſal. O Chriſtians that e now in Chriſt, if Chriſt had taken an hundred fuſals from you, ye ſhould never have been in aven, but he waited for an anſwer, and doth not ke us at our firſt word: According to that word, ong 5. 2. *I am wet*, ſaith he, *with the drops of the orning, and my locks with the dew of the night.* e was long knocking at her heart, and ſtayed a ng time there patiently, ſuffering all the inju- es he could meet with. And I would poſe you, ink ye that if one of the richeſt of you were ſui- g a very poor Woman, and ſhe refuſed you ſo any times, would your proud hearts ſubmit to ke her? And yet how oftentimes hath the pre- ous heart of Chriſt ſubmitted to many affronts nd refuſals that we have given him. I think, if

it

it were poſſible, Chriſtians would wink whe
firſt they behold Chriſt upon the day of the
eſpouſals: for I ſuppoſe there will be a great d
ſpute between ſhame and love, deſire and conf
ſion: ſhame will make you to cloſe your eyes, b
cauſe ye have oftentimes undervalued that Prince
and yet love dow not let you cloſe them; deſi
will put you to a look, though reflecting upo
your former Wayes, will make you bluſh an
be aſhamed.

Thirdly, to perſwade you to receive Chriſt i
the offer of his free promiſes, I ſhal ſay but the
three words and cloſe. 1. Look to theſe excellen
gifts that Chriſt bringeth with him, he bringe
Juſtification with him, and is not that an exce
lent giſt? He bringeth Sanctification with him
and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth jo
of the holy Ghoſt with him, and is not that a
excellent giſt? He bringeth patience under ſuff
rings with him; and is not that an excelle
giſt? But why ſhould I name what he bringeth
He bringeth himſelf, and all things, and wha
would ye have m re? O, but for one ſaving blin
of his face, it would make your hearts lay dow
your enmity that you have maintained ſo lon
2. O Chriſtian! that ye may cloſe with Chri
do but remember the happineſs that ye will ha
in imbracing him. I told you not long ſince, an
now I put you in mind again, there is a ſixfo
crown which ſhal be put upon your head. Woul
you have long life? then come to Chriſt, a
you ſhal have a Crown of eternal life. Would
have glory? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſha

have a crown of glory. Would ye have knowledge of the myſteries of God? then come to Chriſt, and he ſhal crown you with knowledge. Would you have an eternal felicity, and an uninterrupted happineſs? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhal have an immortal crown. Would you have holineſs and ſanctification? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a crown of righteouſneſs; yea, he ſhal put a royal crown upon your head, a crown of pure gold; and then that word ſhal be accompliſhed to the full, Zech. 9.16. *Then ſhall they be as the ſtones of a crown liſted up, and as an enſign upon the Land.* O what a day think ye will it be, when Chriſt ſhall hold your Crowns upon his hand, and ſhall put them upon thoſe heads never to be removed again: Here we are often put to fight out that lamentation, *The Crown is fallen from our heads; wo unto us, for we have ſinned:* but there ſhal be no ſin to make our crown to totter. 2. I muſt tell you, there is a fourfold ſure of apparel that ye ſhal be cloathed with ere long: ye are now cloathed with heavineſs; but then ye ſhal be cloathed with the garments of praiſe. And did ye ever know ſuch a robe as that? Is it not a more excellent robe, then the robes of Kings and Emperors in the earth, to be clothed with praiſes? Many of them are and ſhal be for ever cloathed with infamy and ſhame. 2. Ye ſhal be cloathed with change of raiment, and ſhal be brought unto the King *in raiment of needle work.* O poor Laſs and poor Lad, that ſitteth upon the Dung-hill, that knows not what it is to have change of apparel, ye ſhal have it in that day, when Chriſt ſhal

ſolemnize the marriage with you; ye ſhal misk
your ſelf. O Chriſtian! if ye know your ſelf ne
ſo well, ye will be forced to cry out: *O is this*
O is this I, that am now made perfect through
comelineſs. 3. Ye ſhal be cloathed with the g
ments of *immortal glory*; yo that have your *fou*
dation in the duſt, and dwell in houſes of clay,
ſhall then be cloathed *with theſe robes of immor*
lity, and cloathed upon with your houſe from H
ven. And laſtly, ye ſhal be cloathed with the g
ment of the *ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of Chriſt.*
ſuch a majeſtick walk as ye will have, when
ſhall have a Scepter in one hand, a Palm in t
other, theſe robes put upon your back, and the
crowns upon your heads, and then ſhall be wal
ing through theſe ſtreets that are paved with go
3. I ſhal give you this word to think upon, th
there are five things that ſhall be your exerciſe
Heaven. 1. Ye ſhall be conſtantly taken up
wondering: If it be not preſumption for us
think a little, what is the exerciſe of Chriſt a
the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this
Chriſt is wondering at their beauty, and they a
wondering at his beauty: Chriſt is looking upo
them, and they upon him: and is it not true, th
if Chriſt be not raviſhed with one of our eyes
Song. 4. *verſ.* 9. much more ſhall he be raviſhe
when both our eyes ſhal be given to him, & ſh
eternally behold him, without going a whorin
after other lovers. 2. Ye ſhall be continually
the exerciſe of praiſe: joy and light ſhal be flow
ing in, and admiration and praiſe ſhal be flowi
out eternally; ye ſhall then ſweetly warble upo
theſ

theſe harps of God, and ſhal cry, *Hallelujah unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne*: There ſhal be no diſcord there; there is a ſweet and beautiful harmony amongſt all theſe ſpiritual and heavenly Muſicians. *O* but to hear them, it were a Heaven, though we had not that bleſſed lot as to ſing with them. 3. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in the exerciſe of love. Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here, but love ſhal be your predominant grace when ye are there. *O!* is it not a miſtery to take up theſe ſweet emanations of love and of delight, that ſhall paſs betwixt Chriſt and you? Ye ſhal be infolding Chriſt, and Chriſt ſhal be infolding you. 4. Ye ſhall be continually beholding him. I think it hardly poſſible for the wife to remember her husband in heaven, though ſhe loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that ſitteth on the Throne: they will think it too low an object to be taken up with looking upon another in theſe relations: all will be raviſhed beholding him, & one another in him, and for him. O the bleſſed exerciſe of thoſe that are now entered within that city, and within thoſe gates, whoſe name is praiſe. 5. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in beholding: ye ſhal be alwayes knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endleſs miſteries and perfections of Jeſus Chriſt. O ſuch a ſtudy! Is it not pleaſant alwayes to be ſtudying Chriſt? and will not theſe things perſwade you?

And now but a word more to thoſe that will not have this free offer: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt and take him, let me tell you, I would not

be in the ſtead of that perſon for ten thouſa
Worlds: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt, and ta
him for your portion, the ſtones of the wall
this houſe will bear witneſs againſt you, and th
ſhall have a tongue to ſpeak againſt you, that
have been invited to take him, and would not. E
long that day is approaching, & is drawing ne
when the Atheiſts and refuſers of Chriſt they ſh
change their faith, they ſhall change their lov
they ſhall change their fear, and they ſhall cha
their joy, and they ſhall change their mind:
ſhal change your faith, ye that are refuſers
Chriſt; for I know there are many that thin
they have cloſed with Chriſt, who never did cl
with him: that faith ſhall flee away, and ye ſh
believe the contrarie; Ye ſhall change your lo
or at leaſt your opinion of your love: Ye thi
ye love Chriſt, but ye imbrace him not, I w
tell you what will be your exerciſe, and I can t
you nothing ſo terrible: Chriſt ſhall eterna
hate you, and ye ſhall eternally hate Chriſt: th
ſhall be a mutual hatred betwixt you two
evermore. O that dreadful word, *Zech.* 11. 8.
ſhall then be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt;
ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred
And ye ſhal change your fear; for now though
fear not God, not reverence man, yet there
horror of God ſhal make you ſhake as a leaf, a
ye ſhal change your light and your judgment.
do now undervalue Chriſt, and thinks him of
thing worth; when Chriſt is preſented to yo
there is no beauty why ye ſhould deſire him: E
O think on that day when Chriſt ſhal ſit do

in the clouds, and ye ſhall ſee his beautiful face, every ray of which ſhall be able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be raviſhed with the ſight. O what will be your thoughts of him? And if the bleſſings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the eternal, and the unſupportable vengeance of Chriſt ſhal light upon your heads, that would not condeſcend to take him: ye ſhall be curſed in your life, ye ſhall be curſed in your death, and ye ſhall be curſed after death; what ſay ye to it? Are ye content to take him? Ye may bleſs the day that ever ye were born if ye could once come to cloſe with Chriſt. Now to him that hath the keyes of the houſe of *David*, that can open your hearts to give himſelf entry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON IV.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the World through luſt.*

THere are three moſt glorious and excellent gifts that God hath beſtowed upon man: there is that compreheoſive gift of heaven, *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is ſo called, *John* 4. 10. and ſure ſuch a gift as that, ought in ſome ſenſe to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The ſecond Royal gift that the Lord hath given, is, the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, which are given unto us thorow him. A Chriſtian that is united unto

him by the blood of faith, he may write this a
bove the head of every promiſe of the everlaſtin
Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* Hi
third precious gift, is the gift of *faith*, which i
that grace which maketh uſe of the former two
and we conceive that our little making uſe o
theſe three excellent gifts, is the great occaſio
& cauſe why theſe four ſad and lamentable evil
have befallen us. 1. The evil of a ſilent con
ſcience, that though we be profound to commi
iniquity, and do love a reward under ever gree
Tree, yet our conſciences doth not ſpeak nor re
prove us: and if at any time they do ſpeak, ye
there are ſome that are ſo poſſeſſed with a dum
and deaf ſpirit, they can neither hear what Go
doth ſpeak, nor can they hear their conſience
2. The evil of a ſilent rod: we know not the voic
of our rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it*
God doth not now open *our ears to diſcipline, no*
ſeal up our inſtruction. 3. There is that evil o
ſilent mercies: the mercies that we receive o
God we underſtand not the language of them: a
not our mercies Barbarians unto us, ſpeaking t
us in an unknown tongue? And yet we may ſa
there is not a rod nor mercy a Chriſtian mee
with, but it hath a voice, if we did underſtand i
And laſtly, there is that evil that hath befallen us
and alace, this is the cape ſtone of all, *a ſilent God*
who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cry
but turneth about the face of his Throne, *cov*
ering himſelf with a cloud in his anger, ſo that o
prayers cannot paſs through. Alace! may not ea
Chriſtian of this time cry out, *Call me no mo*

Naom

Naomi, but call me Marah, becauſe the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. In ſhort, I think there are theſe two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Iſrael*. Firſt, that we live without ſight of God. And ſecondly, that we live without ſight of our ſelves; and all this is, becauſe we live without a ſight of theſe precious gifts, Chriſt and his promiſes.

But now to the words. We told you, that in them there were theſe four things holden forth concerning the promiſes. 1. The original and fountain of the promiſes, in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom*. 2. The properties of the promiſes which we told you, were theſe four. The firſt was, that the promiſes were free, holden forth in that word, they are *given*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant being the noble gifts of God. The ſecond (of which we are to ſpeak at this time) is this that the promiſes of the covenant they are *unchangeable*, which is imported alſo in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance. And as to this: 1. We ſhal prove the truth of the point, and for this end, conſider that place, *Numb.* 23. 19. which was a part of *Balaams* ſong: *Hath he not ſpoken it, and will he not alſo do it? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhal it not alſo come to paſs?* And Pſal. 39. 34. *I will not break my covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*; and the point is clear alſo from the name that the promiſes getteth in Scripture are they not called, *The ſure mercies of David? Iſai.* 55. 3. And are they not ſometimes in the Scripture called *truth*, as we may ſee from *Micah.* 7. 20. Thirdly,

the nature of the covenant proveth it, in that it is called, *an everlasting covenant*, and sometimes *a covenant of salt*, because that covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrifaction. And fourthly, it may be likewise shown from the constant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableness of the promises. Thus *Joshua* taketh notice of, *chap.* 23.14. where when he was dying, *There hæth not failed*, saith he, *one thing of all these good things that God hath spoken*; and he is so confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that *verse*, & he taketh notice of it *Josh.* 21.45. where he hath the same expression again! *There hath not failed*, saith he, *one thing of all the good things that God hath spoken: and this Solomon* he took notice of, 1 Kings 8.56. *There hath not failed one thing that God hath spoken unto us by Moses*: and indeed there is near six thousand years experience that preacheth this truth. *The promises are unchangeable*; so that we may now say: *The word of the Lord is tryed as silver purified in a furnace of earth hot seven times.* If there had been any falshood in the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, six thousand years tryal should have brought it to light: but doth not every one of the cloud of witnesses that hath gone before us, leave this testimony upon record: *Faithful is he that hath promised, who will also do it: his promise is with the night, and with the day*, it cannot be altered: the ordinances of heaven continue to this day; much less can this Covenant of love be broken or altered: only we would have you taking this caution by the way, that there are some conditional

ditional promiſes that God paſſeth unto his people, which in the depths of his ſpotleſs wiſdom, he doth not accomplish unto thoſe who never fulfill the condition: ſuch was that promiſe that he gave to the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Egypt*, of their poſſeſſing the Land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderneſs. And hence is that ſtrange word, *Numb.* 14.34. *Ye ſhal know my breach of promiſe, ſaith the Lord*; which is a word ſpoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpoſe in God, but only shewing that becauſe they did not believe, and ſo fulfill the condition of the promiſe, therefore it was not to be fulfilled perſonally to them.

The ſecond thing that we ſhall ſpeak to upon this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhall be to propoſe theſe ſix golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is built. And the firſt of them is, *the Omnipotencie of God*, that there is nothing he hath promiſed, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to paſs: Therefore, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. when God hath been paſſing many excellent promiſes, he ſtrengtheneth their faith with this, *Thus ſaith the Lord God Almighty:* and no doubt, *where the word of this* King *is, there is power*; *and who can ſay unto him, What doeſt thou*? O misbeliever of the precious promiſes of the Covenant! be aſhamed to caſt youreyes to Heaven above, or to the Earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may ſpeak that to you, do not misbelieve God, but truſt in him, *That is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in*

working. The ſecond is, the wiſdom and infinite counſel of God: he hath not only compleat ability to accompliſh the promiſe that he hath given, but he hath the depths and treaſures of knowledge, by which he hath contrived the way of the accompliſhment of ſuch a promiſe. Hence is that word, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. that the Covenant it is well ordered, which ſpeaketh out the wiſdom of God; and then that word is ſubjoyned, the Covenant *is ſure*; yea, the Covenant of grace is ſuch a thing, that there is ſo much of the art of Heaven, ſo much of infinite wiſdom ſhinning in it, that it is called, *The counſel of God*, Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counſel.* The third golden pillar, is the *infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accompliſh the promiſes, yet he will take an argument from his own love to make out ſuch a promiſe to us. There is ſometimes (if not alwayes) nothing in us, but that which may ſpeak forth delays of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; but when God can bring no argument from his own love, as *Deut.* 7. 7. 8. where giving a reaſon of the accompliſhment of many promiſes, & of his love to them; *I loved you*, ſaith he, *becauſe I loved you*; there being no reaſon that can be given of love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableneſs of the Promiſer*, that he is the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever, and without all alteration and ſhadow of change. Hence ye may ſee in *Exod.* 3. 14. when God is repeating many precious promiſes unto *Moſes*, he (as it were) ſtrengtheneth *Moſes* faith with this, *I am*,

ſaith

ſaith he, *that I am*; which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableneſs of God, that what he hath ſaid, he will certainly accomplish in its own times; and though *the viſion do tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak.* The fifth is, *the faithfulneſs of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath ſpoken. Love it maketh the promſes; the faithfulneſs and power of God accomplisheth the promiſes, and the infinit wiſdom of God chooſeth the moſt fit time for performing of them. Hence it is ſaid, Pſalm 119. 89. 90 *Thy word, O Lord, is for ever ſetled in Heaven*; and the ground of it is in the following ver. *For thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations.* Hence you may ſee, that often times when God is making promiſes to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, Iſai.* 45. 19. & *Iſai.* 63 1. *O*, muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made by the Father who is the God of truth? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth it ſelf, and the *faithful Witneſs and Amen*? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are applied by the holy Ghoſt, that is *the Spirit of Truth*? And muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made known unto us by the Goſpel, that is *the word of Truth*. Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithful in the accomplishment of his promiſes. O what a clear ſight of the faithfulneſs of God shal a Chriſtian get, when he shall be ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time & Eternity, then he will ſee God faithful in accomplishing

all his promises unto him from first to last. The last golden pillar is the justice of God. His Justices is now putteth him to accomplish his promises: Mercy and Righteousnes have now kissed each other. Hence is that word, 1 John 9. *He is just and faithful to forgive.* So that now the accomplishment of the promises, it is not only an act of love, but it is an act of justice also. We confess indeed, love and mercy maketh the promises; but justice and truth also putteth God to the a compliſhmeot of them. Hence is that word, Mich. 7. 20. *To perform the Truth to* Jacob, *and the mercy to* Abraham. Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and is it truth to *Jacob*? It is in short this, because mercy made the promises to *Abraham*, but truth did accomplish the promises ro *Jacob*.

The third thing that we shal speak to from this, that the promises are unchangeable, shall be to press these six duties upon you from this point.

O Christians and expectants of Heaven, who have Christ in you, the hope of glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promises are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is pressed from this ground, Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have strong consolation.* There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Christian from this, that the promises shall be accomplished in their owu time. We conceive that the word unchangeable, it is ingraven upon the head of many a Christians mercies. Is not unchangeable written above the head of our promises? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our blessednes

bleſſedneſs? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we ſhal have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable.* And we conceive, that if theſe two were believed; the truth of the promiſes, and the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes; a Chriſtian might walk through this valley of tears with joy, and comfort himſelf in hope.

The ſecond duty we would preſs, is this,-that ye would ſurceaſe and give over diſputings and carnal reaſonings about the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ſince the promiſes of God are unchangeable: ought not we with this, to ſilence misbelief; and all that blind humane reaſon can ſay: this is preſſed, *Heb.* 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all ſtrife.* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut ſhort the diſputings of misbelief: And here give me leave to point out a little theſe grounds upon which it is that Chriſtians do ſo much diſpute the accompliſhment of promiſes, and to let you ſee how all theſe grounds may be anſwered from theſe ſix pillars that were given of their unchangeableneſs.

The firſt is, when diſpenſations ſeemeth to contradict the truth of the promiſes: the promiſe it ſpeaketh one thing, and diſpenſations ſeem to ſpeak another: and this is the occaſion that oftentimes Chriſtians cry out. *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practiſe of *David*? 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. when diſpenſations were upon the top of the accompliſhment, & truth of

the

the promiſes, then misbelief it ariſeth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I ſhall one day fall by the hand of Saul*: And we conceive that diſpenſations contradicting the truth of the promiſes, was the occaſion of his ſpeaking that word, Pſal. 116.11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all men are liars.* And I would only ſay to you that diſpute the truth of the promiſes upon this account that diſpenſations contradicteth them, do but conſider this: God in his way is not like unto you. Would ye know the time when the promiſes are neareſt their accompliſhment? It is then when we can leaſt ſee that they are to be accompliſhed: the promiſes are never nearer their performance, then when we think they are furtheſt off from it: And therefore let the faith of the Omnipotency of God uphold your ſpirit under ſuch a debate, then let diſpenſations ſpeak what they will, ye may anſwer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him.* I grant, this may try the ſtrength of the ſtrongeſt faith; yea, we find it hath made the beſt to ſtagger when they had no probabilites to tell them that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed: this was the ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18.12. that when ſhe heard ſhe ſhould bear a ſon in her old age, ſhe laughed within her ſelf, and did, as it were, mock at ſuch a promiſe: and this was the ground of *Moſes* his unbelief, *Num.* 11. 21. 22. he did not ſee a probability that ſuch a multitude could be fed with fleſh, and therefore he did call in queſtion the truth of that promiſe. This was the ground of the misbelief of that Lord that is made mention, 2 *Kings* 7. 2. and this was the

ground

ground of *Zecharies* misbelief, *Luke* 1. 20. But I would only say to you that do so much consult with probability in the exercise of your faith, these two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14. *verse* of that 18. *chapter*: *Is there any thing to hard for God?* And 2. Faith is never in its native and spiritual exercise, till once probabilities contradict the truth of the promise; then faith it is put upon the stage, & then faith doth act: but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the strength of faith, is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishent of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God. Sometimes a Christian will believe a promise, and before it the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkned, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then do they quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promise. These two are joyned together, want of the faith of our interest, and want of faith of the accomplishment of the promise; as is clear from that word, Psalm 77. vers. 8. *Is his mercies clean gone?* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoyned, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of Heaven, and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, it will be a hard and difficult task for him if not impossible, to believe the promise.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the

the truth of the promiſes, is their miſtaking the way how the promiſes are accompliſhed: there are ſome that ſuppoſe, that when ever they cloſe with a promiſe by faith, there is no more but to enter to the poſſeſſion of ſuch a promiſe: but do not miſtake it, betwixt your believing the promiſe and the accompliſhment of it, there may be ſad and dark days interveening, according to that word in *Mark* 10. 30. where Chriſt paſſing great promiſes to his diſciples, he as it were, doth adde, do not miſtake me that ye ſhall have theſe promiſes without trouble and affliction, *Ye ſhal receive*, ſaith he, *an hundred fold in this life with perſecutions*. A Chriſtian when he believeth the promiſes, he muſt reſolve to have a Winter before the Spring-time come; whereby the promiſes ſhall bud and flowriſh.

The fifth ground of a Chriſtian diſputing the truth of the promiſes, is, when the promiſes are long in their accompliſhing. A Chriſtian when firſt he meeteth with a promiſe, he will cry forth, *O, I believe*, but when time is taken for the accompliſhment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languiſh and give over; yea, ſometimes Chriſtians they fall into this fault, when they believe a promiſe, they fix a day for the accompliſhment of it; which if God do not keep, but go over, then they immediately cry forth, *What is my ſtrength that I ſhould wait? and what is my confidence that I ſhould prolong my dayes?* This is clear in the practiſe of *Abraham*, where the promiſe of having a numerous ſeed being given to him, *Geneſ.* 12. 2, the long time before

before that promiſe was accomplished in part to him, was the occaſion of his unbeliet, that he vented, Gen. 15. 3. *O Lord, what wilt thou give me ſince I go childleſs?* But ye muſt know, that before the *viſion* ſhall ſpeak, there is an appointed time that ye muſt wait, according to 1 Pet. 5. 9. 10. *After ye have ſuffered a while*, then the promiſes ſhall be accomplished, and ye ſhall be made perfect.

The ſixth ground upon which Chriſtians call in queſtion the accomplishment of the promiſes, is, The conſideration of the greatneſs of the thing that is promiſed, when they compare it with their own worth and deſerving, then they begin to diſpute, *O ſhall ſuch a thing be?* ſhall unworthy I, ſhal ſinful I, ſhal ſelf-deſtroying I, ſhal I that am leſs then the leaſt of all his mercies, receive the accomplishment of ſuch a mercy? This we may ſuppoſe was one ground of *Abrahams* misbelief; *Geneſ.* 17. 18. when he cried forth at that ſame time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promiſe of an *Iſaac*. *Oh, that Iſhmael might live!* He thought an *Iſaac* ſuch an excellent mercy, that he could not without preſumption, expect the accomplishment of that promiſe. And in *Zech.* 8. 6. this was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth ſweetly obviate, *If it be wonderfull in the eyes of the remnant of this people in theſe dayes, ſhould it alſo be wonderful in mine?*

The laſt ground upon which Chriſtians diſpute the accomplishment of the promiſes, is, When in the time between their believing and the accomplishment of the promiſe, they fall into ſome groſs iniquity,

iniquity, this maketh them exceedingly deba
whether the promiſe ſhall be accomplished un
them, for ſince they have tranſgreſſed the Cov
nant of God, and have broken their purpoſes an
reſolutions, they cannot ſuppoſe God will abid
faithful to them, and once accomplish his pro
miſes unto them, and the only way how to an
ſwer this diſpute, is, to look to the faithfulneſs o
God, and uſe that word, 2 Tim. 2. 13. *Though*
we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he can
not deny himſelf.

And now to shut up this ſecond duty that w
preſs from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes
I shal only ſay theſe two words unto you, 1. Aſ
ſure your ſelves of this, that theſe accomplish
ments of the promiſes that come not through the
lively exerciſe of faith doth looſe much of thei
ſweetneſs, much of their luſter, and much o
their advantage: ſometimes a promiſe will be
accomplished unto a Chriſtian, when he hath not
been much in the conſtant lively exerciſe of faith
in believing ſuch a promiſe; but then the diſad
vantage that attendeth ſuch a one, are not eaſily
expreſſed. How often may he cry out, *The Lord*
was in this place, & I was not aware? How lit
tle of God doth he ſee in it? How short is he in
praiſes and rendering to the Lord, according to
the good he hath received? How negligent in im
proving or keeping the mercy, and how loath to
lay it out for God, when he ſaith, *The Lord hath*
need of it? and many things more of this kind,
which may preſs us to be ſtedfaſt in believing. And
2. O diſpute leſs, and believe more: what profit
sha

ſhal ye have of your diſputing? and if ye would produce all your ſtrong arguments why ye ſhould not believe the promiſes, ye may drown them in his immenſe depth, God is unchangeable. Let me ſay but this further, There are three moſt remarkable changes in a Chriſtian, in his making uſe of the promiſes: Firſt, ſometimes he will believe the promiſes and make application of them, ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promiſe which preſently he believed. Will not ſometimes a Chriſtian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry, out, *My hope and my ſtrength is perished from the Lord*? Sometimes a Chriſtian in the morning will cry, *My mountain ſtandeth ſtrong, I ſhall never be moved*; and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out, *Thou haſt hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Secondly, ſometimes a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *ſweeter then the honey & the honey comb.* Sometimes a Chriſtian would die and live upon the promiſes: Sometimes the believing of a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *as the valley of Achor a door of hope*, that will make him to ſing, & yet ere many days go about, he may come to the ſame very promiſe, and it will prove taſtleſs to him as the *white of an egg*, ſo that he may cry out, *O that it were with me as in the moneths paſt, and in the ancient times*: And, O where is the ſweetneſs that I found in ſuch a promiſe? *O* it is gone, it is gone, and I am left deſolate! Thirdly, ſometimes when a Chriſtian will be believing

ſuch

ſuch a promiſe; and reſting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) ſee much light & clearneſs in that promiſe, he will take up the deep things of God that ſhineth therein; & at another time he may come to that ſame promiſe, & it may be dark to him, ſo that his light hath evaniſhed and ſometimes the joy of a Chriſtian in the promiſe will be gone, when his light that he had in it may remain with him. A Chriſtian may come to the promiſe, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore if ye would have the promiſes alwayes ſweet unto you, pray over them. pray that God might breath upon ſuch a promiſe, & make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would preſs upon you from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is that which by proportion ye may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*: theſe two are conjoined: yea, *Joshua* ſeemeth to inſer the unchangeableneſs of the threatnings from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, *Chap.* 23. 14 compared with *verſe* 15. and theſe are conjoined, Zech. 8. 14. 15. *That as I thought to punish you, and it hath come to paſs, ſo have thought to build you up, & it shal come to paſs.* And I would from this deſire you to ſtand in awe leſt you come under the laſh of the unchangeable threatnings of God; for know, that as God is unchangeable in the promiſes, and there is not one word in all the everlaſting covenant that shal not be accomplished; ſo likewiſe know, there is not a curſe in all the Book of the Covenant, but it shall be accomplished in its time: And know that like

ill likewiſe, that the day is coming when that ſad
d word thats in *Hoſ.7.12.* ſhall be accomplished, *I*
e *will chaſtiſe them as their Congregation hath heard.*
ne And, O ye that live in this place, if all the threat-
a nings that your Congregations hath heard, shal be
d accomplished in their time, ye may take up the
r o liſt words of *Balaams* ſong, alas! *Who shall live*
i *when God shal do theſe things.* And therefore ſince
: t he threatnings of God are unchangeable, as alſo
h i he promiſes, life and death is ſet before you; and
e i ther ye ſhall be the object of the unchangeable
o t threatnings of God, or ye muſt be the object of the
a t unchangeable promiſes of God: And therefore I
o d Would from this charge you, that as you would
p o not be helpful to the deſtruction of your immor-
ſe tal Souls, you would not undervalue the threat-
v e nings that ye hear in your Congregations, ſince
u n there is a declaration paſt, that the threatnings in
b u your Congregations shal be accomplished.

t h Now there is that fourth duty that we would
r e preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are
a n unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the
s Promiſer, let this commend the *Promiſer*; let this
ſo constrain your hearts to delight in the *Promiſer.*
a D what a bleſſed diſpenſation of love is this, that
w e n unchangeable God should make unchangeable
a b promiſes unto changeable creatures. If the pro-
u miſe of the covenant of Grace were as changeable
o n in their nature as we are changeable, there should
n e not one of us go to Heaven: but know, it is the
o t bleſſed deſign of love, and it hath been a bleſſed
h a practiſe of the infinite wiſdom of God, that when
t h e hath to do with changeable creatures, he will
i k

give

give them unchangeable promiſes. And I woul
once invite you again, that ye would come nea
and imbrace this *unchangeable Promiſer.* I ſha
ſpeak theſe five words that may perſwade yo
Firſt, Chriſt is eaſily to be gotten if ye will tak
him, ye will get Chriſt if ye will but hear, yea, fo
one liſtening of your ear to his voice ye ſhal ge
him: according to that word *Iſai.* 55.3. *Hear &*
what of that? and *your ſoul ſhal live.* Is not this t
get Chriſt at an eaſie rate; and as we ſpake be
fore, ye will get Chriſt for a look, and is not tha
an eaſie rate; Iſai. 45.22 *Look unto me, all ye end*
of the earth and be ſaved: Have ye a deſire to tak
Chriſt, ye ſhall get him for that deſire, accordin
to that word, Iſa. 55.1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth*
let him come, and he that wills let him come: will y
but conſent for to take him, ye ſhall have him
and what can you have at a lower rate then this
Shall never your curſed hands take the pen an
put to your name to the bleſſed contract of mar
riage? Shall never theſe curſed hearts of ours cr
forth, *Even ſo I take him,* and do promiſe to liv
to him, and to die to him. O ſtrange! will ye no
do it? Upon what terms would the World hav
Chriſt, is it poſſible to have him without a con
ſent to take him? Oh, if ye would but open t
him, he would condeſcend to come in unto you
and to ſup with you, and ye with him: do ye bu
ſtir to open, Chriſt hath the keyes in his hand
and he will help you to open. O what if Chri
the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admir
tion of Angels, that branch of righteouſneſs, ſha
be deſpiſed, being offered upon ſo eaſie terms
the

hen curſed eternally ſhal be that perſon that thus ndervalueth Chriſt, it had been better for him hat he had never been born: Curſed ſhal you be n your birth, and in your life, and in your death: ll the curſes of the perſons of the Trinity will ight upon you, yea believe it. *O* wife, that hath believing husband, in the day that the great ſenence of eternal excommunication from the preence of the Lord, ſhall be paſt againſt the underaluers of Chriſt, a believing husband will ſay men, to that ſentence, even to his wife, that did hus undervalue that noble Plant of renown: and he wife upon the other part, will ſay with hearty onſent Amen, to that ſentence againſt the unbeieving husband, and the father to the ſon, and the on to the father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would reſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are nchangeable, that ye would be perſwaded to make the promiſes your portion and your inheriance; What can ye want that will choiſe the proniſes for your portion? I know our curſed eyes oth not love to make inviſible promiſes, and that nviſible crown, & an inviſible God our portion, e love to walk by ſight, not by faith. But oh, if ou knew once what it were but to claim a relaion to Chriſt! Did ye once know what it were to ave but Chriſt a moment between your breaſts, e would cry forth, *O! who would not love him that s the King of Saints?* who would not be content o quite all things, that they might get Chriſt that oble pearl of price?

And there is this laſt duty that we would preſs upon

upon you from this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, read a lecture from off this, O Chriſtian? even your misbelief, God hath confirmed his everlaſting Covenant with *an oath*, with the *blood of his Son* by the two great broad ſeals of heaven, *the Sacrament of baptiſm & the Lords ſupper*. And what doth all theſe confirmations ſpeak, but our dreadful misbelief, & that we know not what it is to be reſting on a naked word of promiſe. I shal ſay no more, but deſire that ye would conſider and take notice of theſe three. Firſt, ye have been ſolemnly and often invited by the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, to cloſe with him, and to take him for your Husband and your Lord, and will you conſider preſently, that all the Angels in Heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three moſt glorious, moſt bleſſed Perſons of the Trinity, that they are witneſſes, and ſhall be to your diſſent. And are there not many here whoſe hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty conſent to cloſe with Chriſt that is the great Promiſer, and who hath laid all the bonds that heaven or earth could contrive to gain ſinners hearts unto himſelf. O precious Chriſt! what could he do to perſwade us to love him which he hath not done? and yet that may be your name, which is in *Eph.* 2. 2. *Children of diſobedience*, or as the word is, Children of *imperſwaſion*, we cannot be perſwaded. Secondly, I fear if Chriſt himſelf would come from heaven and invite you, and ſay, Here am I, imbrace me, there are ſome here who would cloſe not only their eyes, but their ears: they would cloſe their eyes leſt the beauty of Chriſt

should

ſhould allure them, they would cloſe their curſed ears, leſt they ſhould be gained and captivate by the ſweet enchanting voice of that bleſſed Charmer, when he ſhould charm ſo wiſely. And laſtly, Wilt thou tell me, O Chriſtian and expectant of Heaven, what a day ſhall it be when all the unchangeable promiſes of God ſhall be accomplished? What a day ſhal it be when that promiſe ſhal be accomplished, *Ye ſhall ſee him as he is*? What a day ſhal it be, when that promiſe ſhall be accomplished, *Ye ſhal be made like unt him*? What a day ſhal it be when that promiſe ſhall be accomplished, *Ye ſhall know as ye are known*? O not longing for the day of the full accomplishment of the precious promiſes of God, when [illegible] down and comfort your ſelves in the [illegible] unſpeakable fruition of them? O let us wait till the day ſhall be when that voice is heard in Heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* O how unwilling are we to leave a World! And how gladly would we give up our reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*! I think if this were the night that that bleſſed voice were to be heard in Heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*: ſome, if not many of the Chriſtians (that are ſo indeed) in this time, would cry forth, *Oh, ſpare, a little, that we may recover ſtrength, before we go hence and ſhall be no more.* Are ye not longing to bring the King over *Jordan*, and to bring him home to your ſelf, and to have your heart brought home to him? O bleſſed, bleſſed are theſe that are above: Is not the voice of theſe *that ſhout for victory* heard amongſt them?

Is

Is not the voice of these *that sing for joy* heard amongst them? *Job* doth not now any more complain, *Why dost thou make me to possess the iniquity of my youth, and setteth a print upon my heels? David* doth now no more complain, *Why doth thy promise fail for evermore?* But rather doth sweetly sing, *How is thy promise fulfilled for evermore? Heman* doth now no more complain, *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted*; but rather cryeth out, *While I feel thy comforts, I am ravished.* The [illegible] mourning is now sweetly gone away [illegible] voice of Hallelujah, and of eternal [illegible] that sitteth upon the Throne, is [illegible] in the place of it. O such a day, that [illegible] admit of a following night. Now that [illegible] is upon his way, that will come, and [illegible] come, and shal not tarry, we desire to [illegible] praise.

SERMON V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust.*

THere are three cardinal and excellent graces that are exercised and taken up with the precious promises: there is the excellent grace of faith, that believeth the truth and the goodness of the promise: there is the precious grace of hope that with patience waiteth for the accomplishment of the promise, and doth stay until the vision speak: and that noble grace of love, that loved et[illegible]

oveth the thing that is promiſed, and taketh exceeding much delight in the Promiſer. If we may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, we think theſe ſtrange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Eccleſiaſtes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptineſs of all things that are here below God. And we do indeed conceive, that it is the great deſign of God in the darkning of our pleaſant things, and in making *every good gourd to wither*; under the ſhadow of which we uſe to repoſe our ſelf, and in *famiſhing all the Gods of the earth*, to bring his own to delight themſelves in this inviſible treaſure, *the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant*, and in him who is the ſubſtance of them; and that ſince all things elſe are declared to be vanity, we might choiſe theſe as our portion for ever.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we were ſpeaking unto the properties of the promiſes; and we told you that there were four of them holden forth. 1. *The freedom of the promiſes.* 2. *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſes:* of which two we have ſpoken unto you; and now there remains other two to be ſpoken to, to wit, that the promiſes they are *exceeding great*, and that they are *exceeding precious*; a ſweet and excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatneſs and goodneſs here kiſſing one another, preciouſneſs and highneſs linked together by the bond of Union. And we ſhall ſpeak unto theſe two properties together, and ſhal clear a little this thing, in what reſpects the promiſes of the Covenant may be called exceeding great and precious: And we con-

ceive in ſhort they may be called ſo in theſe eigh
reſpects. Firſt, they are exceeding great, in re
ſpect of the great price that was laid down to pur
chaſe them, there not being a promiſe of the ever
laſting Covenant, above the head of which th
may not be engraven in great letters, *Here is th*
price and purchaſe of blood: And no doubt, th
ought highly to commend the promiſes, that the
are bought at ſo infinite a rate. Muſt they no
be great and precious things that ſo wiſe a Me
chant did lay down ſo infinite a Treaſure for th
purchaſing of them? 2. They may be called ex
ceeding great & precious, in reſpect of thoſe grea
and precious things that are promiſed in them
Is not godlineſs a great thing, and this is withi
the boſom of a promiſe? Is not Heaven and eter
nal enjoyment of God a great & precious thing
and yet this lyeth within the boſom of a promiſe
Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfec
conformity with God, our victory over our Idol
great and excellent things? and yet all theſe ar
treaſured up in the promiſes. 3. They may b
called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect o
the great advantage that redounds to a Chriſtia
through the enjoyment of them: the promiſes o
the everlaſting Covenant, (if ſo we may ſpeak
are the Penſils that draws the draughts and line
ments of the Image of Chriſt upon the ſoul: it
the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant *by whi*
we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by t
ſpirit of the Lord: and as *Peter* doth here ſpea
the promiſes are ſuch things whereby we are ma
partakers of the divine nature. 4. They may
call

called exceeding precious, in reſpect of that near relation that they have unto Jeſus Chriſt, what are all the promiſes of the covenant of grace? Are they not precious ſtreams and rivulets that flow from Jeſus Chriſt? Chriſt is the fountain, out of which all theſe promiſes do ſpring: And can this fountain that is ſweet in it ſelf, ſend forth any bitter waters? Muſt they not be precious things that hath ſuch a noble deſent, as to be ſtreams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, and from him unto us, as the powring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron*: which ran down the beard unto the skirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promiſes, in reſpect they, or rather Chriſt in them, are the object of precious faith. What is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promiſes of the Covenant, and Chriſt the kernil of them? What are theſe things that faith taketh ſo much delight in, and is ſupported by? Is it not the promiſes of the Covenant? 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Chriſt. There is not a promiſe within the book of the covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, *O come to Chriſt.* The promiſes are indeed that Star that leadeth us unto the Houſe where Chriſt doth ly, and there is no acceſs unto Jeſus Chriſt, but by a promiſe: Chriſt is to be found there: for he dwels within the bounds of the everlaſting covenant, and there he will tryſt with his people, and be found of them. And, 7. they may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect that

the Saints have found ſuch ſweetneſs, & ſuch u
ſpeakable delight in the promiſes. Did not *Dav*
find a great ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when h
cried forth, *The words of thy mouth are better t*
me, then thouſands of gold and ſilver? Did he no
find much ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he wa
conſtrained to cry out, *Thy law is ſweeter unto m*
then the honey and the honey comb. David in a man
ner, was put to a *non plus*, to find out any ſuitabl
ſimilitude and ſignificant reſemblance, to poin
out the ſweetneſs of the promiſes: Though w
may ſay the Chriſtians of this time are in a per
petual fever, they have loſt their ſpiritual taſte
ſo that they may ſay, if we may allude unto tha
word, 2 Sam. 19 25. *I am this day fourſcore year*
old, and cannot diſcern betwixt good and evil: can
thy ſervant taſte what I eat or what I drink? The
know not what it is to be overcome with th
ſweetneſs that is to be found in theſe excellen
ſtreams of divine conſolation. Laſtly, the promi
ſes may be called exceeding precious, in that th
Saints have a high & matchleſs account of them.
Hence that word is here rendred *precious*, ma
likewiſe be rendred *honourable*, which ſpeake
forth that there is nothing that hath ſo much o
the eſteem of a Chriſtian as the promiſes. Woul
ye put wiſdom, or riches, or honor, or what y
will in the ballance with the promiſes, they woul
cry forth, What ſhould I profit to gain all theſe
if I loſe the promiſes? We ſhal ſay no more o
this, but that the promiſes are indeed that apple
the eating of which, would make us, in ſome re
ſpect (and in humility be it ſpoken) *as God, know*
in

ing good and evil. The promiſes are theſe things that doth elevate the ſoul unto a Divine conformity with God. And, oh! that this might be the fruit of them! The promiſes are as cords let down to ſouls ſinking *in the myrie clay, and in the horrible pit:* do but lay hold upon them, and ye ſhall undoubtedly be drawn up, and he ſhall ſet *your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to ſpeak of the third thing in the words, which is the advantage and unſpeakable gain that floweth to a Chriſtian through the promiſes, holden forth in theſe words, *that by them ye might be made partakers of the Divine nature*; which words doth not hold forth that there is any ſubſtantial change of our natures into the eſſence of God: but only it holds forth this, that the ſoul that is taken up in believing of the promiſes, doth ariſe unto a likeneſs & conformity to him in holineſs, wiſdom and righteouſneſs. And as theſe advantages that come to a Chriſtian through the promiſes. 1. We muſt lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promiſes, and in making application of them.

And the firſt is, that they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent & neceſſary work of mortification: this is clear from the words of the Text; As likewiſe from 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promiſes have upon ſanctification, may be ſhown unto you in theſe three. Firſt, They lay upon a Chriſtian a divine bond and obligation

to

to ſtudy holineſs, that ſince Chriſt hath ſignifie
and teſtified his reſpects unto us, in ſo ample an
large a way, as to give ſuch precious promiſes
we ought to endeavour to ſtudy holineſs, whic
is that great reward of love that he ſeeketh fro
us for all things that he hath beſtowed, and w
receive, and this is the meaning of that, 2 *Cor.* 7
1. Secondly, The ſtrength and furniture of
Chriſtian for fulfilling and accompliſhing of th
work of Sanctification lyeth within the promiſe
are not the promiſes of God unto a Chriſtian, a
Samſons locks, in which their great ſtrength dot
ly? and if once they cut themſelves off from th
promiſes through misbelief, their ſtrength doth
decay, and they become as other men. Where
muſt the Chriſtian go to for ſtrength? Is it no
to the promiſe? Is it not to the Name of the
Lord? Yea, this is the ſtrength of a Chriſtian un-
to which he moſt reſort continually. And thirdly,
the promiſes of God they hold forth that un-
ſpeakable reward that attendeth that Chriſtian
that ſhal ſtudy holineſs. There are ſeveral promi-
ſes of the everlaſting Covenant, that cryeth forth
to the Chriſtian, to him that overcometh will
this promiſe be accompliſhed, to him that over-
cometh ſhall this truth be fulfilled, and this doth
exceedingly provoke a Chriſtian to wreſtle with
all his diſcouragements he meeteth with in the
way: he buieth his anxieties within the circle
of his immortal Crown, he hopeth for, and ſeeth
in the promiſe, and hope maketh him diſpence
with his wants, his expectation maketh him
overcome his fears, and his looked for joy
maketh

maketh him to diſpence with his ſorrows.

The ſecond advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes do help a Chriſtian to a ſpiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withal maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* believing the promiſes, it is ſubjoyned, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer to God*; and if any will look unto the words of that prayer, they will ſee them running in a heavenly and ſpiritual ſtrain, ſpeaking to him as one much acquainted with God, and under moſt high and majeſtick apprehenſions of his glory, as is clear alſo, *Pſal.* 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning and cryed*, as if *David* had ſaid, would you know what made me thus fervent and diligent in prayer, it was that I hoped in his word; and hence it is, that he hath ſo many prayers in that *Pſalm*, all were occaſioned through the faith of the promiſes, as for inſtance, when he cryed forth, *quicken me according to thy word, be merciful unto me according to thy word.* And we conceive, the faith of the promiſes helpeth a Chriſtian in his prayer, to theſe four Divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him pray with faith: when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promiſes, then he venteth his prayer with much confidence of hope? according to that word, *Pſalm* 65. 3. where ye may ſee a man believing and praying when he is believing, & expreſſing his confidence moſt ſtrangely in theſe words, *As for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge them away*, it is not ſaid, *thou wilt purge them away*, or we deſire that thou ſhould purge them

away, *but thou shalt*, which ſpeaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldneſs of faith: a Chriſtian that believeth the promiſes, he can take the promiſe in his hand and preſent it unto God, and ſay, fulfill this promiſe ſince thou will not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Chriſtian pray with much humility, for when he doth underſtand that there is nothing that he hath but it is the fruit and accompliſhment of a promiſe: he doth not boaſt as theſe that have not received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen.* 32. 10. where we may ſee *Jacob* ſpeaking to God with much humility, and in the 9. *verſe*, he is ſpeaking to God with much faith. And 3. it maketh a Chriſtian pray with much love: would you know the great ground that we are ſo remiſs in the exerciſe of love and prayer, it is, becauſe we build not our prayers upon the promiſes. And 4. it helpeth a Chriſtian to pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cryeth to God? was it not when he was believing the promiſe that was paſt to him of old? we would not plead with God with ſuch remiſneſs, if we did believe the promiſes that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes doth ſometimes uphold a Chriſtian under his ſpiritual deſertions and tentations. Is it not certain, that ſometimes he hath been ready to draw that concluſion, I am caſt out of his ſight, & ſhall no more behold him in the land of the living? when a promiſe that hath been born in upon his ſpirit hath ſupported him, and made him to change

change his ſong, and to invert his concluſion. This is clear from *Pſal* 94.18. when I ſaid, *my foot ſlippeth*, there is the concluſion of misbelief and diſpair, *yet thy mercie, O Lord, did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring in conſolation, not from bygone experience only; but certainly from that which he found in ſome precious promiſes that was born in upon his ſpirit: Many excellent cords of love hath Chriſt let down unto a ſoul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: It is clear likewiſe from *Pſal.* 119. 18. *My ſoul fainted for thy ſalvation*; as if *David* had ſaid; I am in hazard to give over my hope, and to break my confidence: and would ye know what it was that ſupported me under ſuch an eſtate? *I hoped in thy word*: hath not this oftentimes been the ſong of a Chriſtian in their darkeſt night, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my ſoul.* Faith will ſee a morning approaching in the time of the greateſt trouble; and no doubt that promiſe that upholdeth a Chriſtian in their doubting and misbelieving condition, the lively impreſſions of that promiſe will remain a long time with him; and when firſt it is born in upon their ſpirits, they will ſee no ſmall love ſhining forth in carving out ſuch a promiſe to ſuit with ſuch a providence, as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promiſes, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience and divine ſubmiſſion under our ſaddeſt outward afflictions: This is clear from *Pſal.* 27. 13.

I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the good-neſs of the Lord in the land of the living: and from Pſalm 119. 49. 50. where *David* telling his exerciſe in the 49 *I hope*, ſaith he, *in thy word*; immediatly he ſubjoyneth, *This is my comfort in mine affliction*; as if he had ſaid, If I had not had the promiſes to be my comforters, I had ſit alone and kept ſilence, and ſhould have remained without comfort in the day of my adverſity: and verſe 92. *Unleſs thy Law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in my afflictions*: and we conceive in ſhort, the influence which faith upon the promiſes hath upon the patient bearing of the croſs, may be ſhown unto you in theſe two particulars. Firſt, Faith it is an excellent prophet, that always propheſieth unto us good things: Would ye enquire at Faith at your midnight of affliction, what is its opinion of God and of your own ſtate; Faith would ſweetly reſolve you thus, *Wait on God for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance*. Faith knoweth not what it is to have wrong conſtructions of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Chriſtians croſs: If ſenſe, reaſon, and misbelief interpret your croſs, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto me as an enemy*, or *as a liar, and waters that fail*? But if faith that noble interpreter do interpret your croſſes, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are the thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end*. Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee a bleſſed outgate and iſſue of all the ſad diſpenſations that he meeteth with, Faith, that is its divinity, I ſow in tears, but

I ſhall

I ſhal reap in joy: *Weeping may be at evening*, ſaith Faith, *but joy shal come in the morning*. Secondly, it affordeth unto a Chriſtian ſuch ſoul refreſhing conſolation in the midſt of their afflictions, that in a manner, they forget their ſorrows, *as waters that paſs away*. This *David* doth divinely aſſert, in Pſal. 119 50. *This is my comfort in mine affliction*. The Faith of the promiſes are indeed that Tree which if they be caſt into the waters of *Marah*, they will make them immediatly become ſweet.

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes doth help a Chriſtian to a greater diſtance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim; as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 13. where theſe two are ſweetly linked together, the imbracing of the promiſes by Faith, and confeſſing *that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims here on Earth*. And we ſhal ſhow the influence that Faith hath upon this, in theſe three. 1. It maketh a Chriſtian ſee the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Globe of the World *that is not vanity and vexation of ſpirit*. Faith is that proſpect through which a Chriſtian hath moſt clear diſcoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Chriſtian ſee the endleſs perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within ſight of that immenſe and everlaſting hope: and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, and to declare plainly *that he ſeeketh a Countrey*. And 3. it doth exceedingly help him forward in that bleſſed work of weaning of affections from all things that are here: Would ye know where a believers heart is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know

where

where his thoughts are? They are in Heaven, Would ye know where his converſation is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know where his hope is? It is in Heaven, his treaſure is in Heaven, & therefore his heart and converſation is there, *and Chriſt in him is the hope of glory.* And indeed more faith of the promiſes, would conſtrain us all to ſubſcribe that *confeſſion of faith* that is in *Heb.* 11. 13.

The ſixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promiſes, is, that it is the mother of much ſpiritual joy and divine conſolation, and maketh a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of praiſe; this is clear from *Pſal.* 71. 14. *But I will hope continually,* and then immediatly is ſubjoyned, *and will yet praiſe him more & more.* As likewiſe from *Rom.* 15. 13. and from 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. If a man would have his way to Heaven made pleaſant, and while they are ſitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *ſing one of the ſongs of Zion,* then ought they to believe the promiſes, and to chooſe them *as their heritage for ever:* and then he may ſing in hope, and praiſe in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the preſent: indeed, when he looketh to his poſſeſſion, there will not be ſo much matter of rejoycing; but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be conſtrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my glory, I my ſelf will awake early.*

The ſeventh advantage, is, that the faith of the promiſes is a notable mean to attain unto ſpiritual life: this is clear from *Iſa.* 38. 16. *By theſe things,* ſaith *Ezekiah, do men live* (ſpeaking of the promiſes) *and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit.*

As

As likewiſe from *Pſal* 119. 50. Thy words, ſaith David, *hath quickened me*. O what ſpiritual & divine life doth attend that Chriſtian that is much in the exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes! and what is the great occaſion that our hearts are oftentimes dying within us like a ſtone, and we are like unto thoſe that are free amongſt the dead? Is it not becauſe we do not make uſe of the promiſes

Eighthly, There is that advantage, that faith of the promiſes, it maketh a Chriſtian have an eſteem of the thing that is promiſed. What is the reaſon that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlaſting Covenant, this is a *Zoar*, a little one? Is it not becauſe we do not believe? great things ſometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comlineſs that appeareth in them, why they ſhould be deſired: but if we had ſo much faith as a *grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, how excellent are theſe things that are purchaſed to the Saints, and how eternally are they made up that have a right but to one line of the everlaſting covenant, *that it is well ordered in all things & ſure.*

And ninthly, The faith of the promiſes is the door at which the accompliſhment of the promiſes doth enter in: according to that word, *Luke* 1.45. *Bleſſed are they that believe, for there ſhall be a performance of theſe things that are ſpoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes. *The viſion ſhould ſpeak and ſhould not tarry*; And no doubt, a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promiſe, will make it an exceedingly refreſhful thing: When a Chriſtian getteth leave to ſing that ſong

which

which is in *Isai.* 25. 9. *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, he will come and save us.* And when a mercy is the fruit and accomplishment of the promise, there is a beautiful luster added upon that mercy, which no art could set on, but only the finger of the love of God. The smallest mercy then becometh a matchless mystery of love, & the most matchless mysteries of love without the exercise of faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praise them. Faith maketh our thoughts to ascend, and misbelief maketh our thoughts to descend, in relation to the precious mercies of heaven.

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, We have these two mentioned in the Text. 1. That by them we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and are brought up unto that blessed conformity with God, which we had lost in the fall. 2. That by them we escape the corruption of the World through lust. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of these things at this time, because I am only to speak to the exercise of Faith in the promises. But O what excellent mercies are these, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off these ugly defilements which were the image of satan upon our souls. O how should this commend the promises unto us, that by faith in them we do *all behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now that which secondly, we shal speak to, shal

e the advantages that reſults to a Chriſtian from ſpiritual obſervation of the Lords accompliſhing his promiſes; for here ye ſee in the Text, the Apoſtle maketh an obſervation of theſe excellent things that are the fruit of theſe precious promiſes, when they are accompliſhed. And the firſt advantage is, That it ſtampeth the ſoul of a Believer with moſt divine impreſſions of love: this is clear, *Iſai.* 38.15. where *Hezekiah* cryeth out *What ſhal I ſay, he hath both ſpoken it, and himſelf hath done it*, being, as it were, aſtoniſhed and overcome with the apprehenſions of the condeſcendency of God, he is put to a *non plus*, & to *what ſhal I ſay*, Pſal. 48.8.9. *As we have heard* (ſaith David) *ſo have we ſeen in the City of the Lord of hoſts*, that is, according to his promiſe, we have had ſuitable performance: & he ſubjoyneth, *ver.* 9. that which was both their exerciſe and their advantage, *We have thought of thy loving kindneſs, O God in the midſt of thy Temple*, as it were the obſervation of the performance of the promiſe, made their thoughts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promiſe, then eternity were ſufficient to make a commentary upon. It is one wonder of condeſcendency, that God ſhould oblidge & bind himſelf to us by promiſes: and another depth of wonderful love, that he ſhould perform theſe bonds, and anſwer his words with performance.

The ſecond advantage is, That the obſerving of accompliſhment of promiſes, doth bring in to the ſoul new diſcoveries of God: this is clear, *Exod.* 6. 3, where God thus ſpeaketh to *Moſes*, I was

known

known (ſaith he) unto Abraham, and unto Iſaac and unto Jacob, by the name of the Almighty: but by the name of Jehovah was I not known unto them, that is, by the Name of giving an accompliſhment unto my promiſes, that Name was not diſcovered unto them, but ſhould be made known unto their poſterity, in the day when his promiſes ſhould paſs unto performances. And hence it is alſo, that when the Lord is ſpeaking of the accompliſhment of great promiſes, he do ſo often in the Scripture, ſubjoyn that word, *Ye ſhal know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord, Iſai.* 49.23 52. 60. 16. And indeed, we do daily find it ſo; for, is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe a new diſcovery of the *wiſdom of God*, that ſhineth in the ſuitable tyming of the accompliſhment of a promiſe? Is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe a new diſcovery of the *faithfulneſs of God*, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth? And is not every performance of the promiſes a new diſcovery of the *love of God*, that he deſireth to magnifie his mercies above all his works, and a new diſcovery of the power and *omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promiſe, notwithſtanding of all things that are in the way; yea, *make things that are not to be, and bring to nought things that are*.

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a Chriſtian to have high apprehenſions, and majeſtick up-takings of God: this is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. compared with verſ. 17. where *Paul* cloſing with that promiſe; that *Chriſt came into the World to ſave ſinners*, and beholding in the accompliſhing

of it, in himſelf, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*, Amen. There is an Emphaſis in that word now, as if *Paul* ſaid, I could never praiſe and extol him till now, and I am ſo much bound to Chriſt, that I will not delay this exerciſe one moment, now I will bleſs him: and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. where the accompliſhment of the promiſes that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* He became matchleſs unto them through the performance of the promiſes. And ſo we conceive, that theſe who are much in ſpiritual obſervation of the performance of the promiſes, they will ſee precious draughts of the Majeſty of God engraven upon them, ſo that they will be conſtrained to cry out, that he above is mighty, *and that his Name is Jehovah, and in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, upon which we ought to rely in our greateſt ſtraits.

The fourth advantage is, The obſerving of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, will help a Chriſtian when he is redacted unto new ſtraits, to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon God, his former experience will produce hope in his ſoul; for there is not one diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God, but hath a voyce, and cryeth out; *O believe him*, who is able to give a clear being unto his word: This is clear from *Pſalm* 56. at the cloſe, *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, ſaith *David*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perſwaded,

ſwaded, thou wilt likewiſe perform that wo
unto me. And from *Pſal.* 37. 2. 3. he giveth th
title unto God, verſ. 2. that he *performeth*
things for him, and then he doth ſubjoyn, *He sh*
ſend from Heaven and ſave me: and (by the wa
the ſoul that can give God that title and ſtile, *th*
he performeth all things for them, that ſoul muſt
neceſſity be in a choiſe and excellent eſtate: A
the point is clear likewiſe from 2 *Corinth.* 1.
where *Paul* ſaith, *God hath delivered me, and*
doth deliver me; and from hence he draweth th
concluſion of faith, *And he will yet deliver me.* Wh
confeſs ſometimes our former experiences of th
faithfulneſs of God, they do not ſupport our fai
when we are redacted unto new difficulties; whi
is either occaſioned through the greatneſs of th
ſtrait that we are now put to (in our apprehe
ſions) above that which we were put to befor
ſo that though God did deliver us *when we wer*
running with footmen, yet we have no faith to bl
lieve that he ſhal deliver us when we are about t
contend with horſes: or elſe it is, though the u
faithfulneſs of our walk, in not anſwering th
precious diſpenſations of Chriſt, in accompliſh
ment of his promiſes, for this maketh us that w
cannot with boldneſs make uſe of his Word whe
we are brought into a new ſtrait: a guilty co
ſcience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, That the accompliſh
ment of the promiſes doth occaſion much ſpi
tual joy and rejoycing of his own. We told y
the giving of the promiſes occaſioneth joy, a
when the promiſe travelleth in birth, and brin

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eth forth, that occaſioneth much more ſpiritual
oy; this is clear from Pſalm 28. 7. *The Lord is*
y ſtrength and my ſhield, my heart truſteth in him,
nd I was helped. And he draweth this excellent
conclusion from it. *Therefore my heart greatly re-*
joyceth, and with my ſoul will I praiſe him. And we
conceive that ſometimes God tryſteth the accom-
liſhment of the promiſes, with ſome precious
anifeſtation of himſelf to the ſoul, which mak-
eth them to *rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full*
of glory; but however that is the matter of a ſpi-
itual ſong, *That mercy and truth have met to-*
gether, and righteouſneſs and peace kiſſing one
another. It is not a pleaſant matter of a ſong to be-
hold love making promiſes, and to behold faith-
fulneſs accompliſhing them.

And the laſt advantage is, That the obſervation
of the accompliſhment of promiſes, doth
ſtrengthen a Chriſtians faith in his intereſt with
God; ſo that now many diſputings are ſilenced,
and many queſtions now are out of the way: this
is clear from *Pſalm* 31. 21. 22. *David* confeſſeth
his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord
had *ſhewed his marvellous loving kindneſs in a*
ſtrong City, then all his quarrel was againſt him-
ſelf, becauſe he hath *quarrelled*, and did ſay *in his*
haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.

And now we ſhal only ſpeak a little unto ſome
duties that we would preſs upon you, from that
which we have ſpoken. And the firſt duty is, that
Chriſtians would be much in waiting for the ac-
complishment of the promiſes, & ſtanding upon
their watch tower until the *viſion ſhal ſpeak*: And

we

we ſhall only give you theſe things to enforce
1. It is his command that ye ſhould ſo do: this
clear from *Pſalm* 27. at the cloſe, where *Dav*
preſſeth that duty much, *Wait on the Lord*, ſai
he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat th
command in the ſame verſe, *Wait, I ſay, on t*
Lord: & no doubt the doubling of it ſpeaketh n
only the advantage that is in it, but our difficul
to obey it, and the great neceſſity that we have
go about it: and that ſame word it is repeated
David, *Pſ.* 31. 24. *Be of good courage*, which is th
ſame, to wait upon the Lord. 2. Theſe that wa
patiently for the accompliſhment of the promi
God will ſtrengthen them to wait: this is cle
from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe, *Wait on the Lord*, a
when we are *Hagar* like caſting away the child
hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refre
ment, by which we may be ſupported under o
diſquietment, *& he shal ſtrengthen thy heart.* A
there is this, 3. There ſhal be a ſpeedy accompli
ment of the promiſes: it is not long before all t
mercies that ever the Lord hath promiſed, a
thou haſt believed, ſhall be told down to you,
it were, in one ſum, *principal* and *intereſt*: as
clear from *Heb.* 2. 3. where he poſitively aſſerte
That the viſion will come, and will not tarry. The
is indeed a pleaſant, ſeeming contradiction in th
verſ. he hath ſaid before, *that the viſion would ta*
ry, and yet here he ſaith, *the viſion will not tarr*
but will ſurely come: in which ye may ſee the
vinity both of ſenſe and faith, and that noble co
tradiction that is between their aſſertions. *Se*
aſſerting that the promiſe doth tarry too long, a
Fa

faith crying out, it Will ſurely come, it will not tarry: that is always faiths declaration, which is ſet down in 2 Pet. 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe.* 4. Promiſes that come unto us through the moſt ſtrong and lively exerciſe of faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are moſt reliſhing and ſweet: and theſe mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is ſomewhat pointed at in *Iſai.* 25. 9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoyce in his ſalvation*: their waiting & expecting of the promiſes to be accompliſhed in his time, is there the fountain of their ſong and of their ſpiritual joy. I think ſometimes a Chriſtian is like that misbelieving Lord, 2 *King.* 7. 2. that though they meet with the accompliſhment of a promiſe, yet they do not taſte of the ſweetneſs that is in it, becauſe they did not believe the word of the Lord.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs from what we have ſpoken, is, That Chriſtians would cloſe with the promiſes for their everlaſting inheritance, ſince the promiſes of the Covenant are *exceeding great, and exceeding precious*, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unſpeakable. O ſhould not theſe things proclaim aloud unto us, *cloſe with the promiſes as your portion for ever.* I think, one that hath a right to the promiſes, and hath entered himſelf heir unto that vaſte inheritance, he may ſometimes rejoyce in that three-fold myſtery of the Goſpel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other then a contradiction.

1. He

1. He may ſay ſometimes, *I have nothing*, & ye *poſſeſs all things*; for when he looketh unto being in the world, he is poor as *Lazarus*, havi no place whereon to lay his head; but when he ſteth his eye unto his ſpiritual inheritance, th he beholdeth his treaſures & is conſtrained to out, *I poſſeſs all things*. 2. Sometimes he may forth, *I am rich*, and yet I am *exceeding poor*: may be rich in hopes, and yet poor in his poſſe ſions. There is much of a Chriſtians treaſure th lyeth in hope: hope is that thing that will ma the Chriſtian ſweetly quite all other in compa ſon of that. That is the motto of the Chriſtia *ſpero meliora*, which he holdeth up in his flag, ev in the greateſt ſtorm, and at lenghth he findeth true, that hope *maketh not aſhamed*. 3. Som times the Chriſtian will cry forth, *I am alwa ſorrowing*, and yet always *rejoycing*: when he ca eth his eye unto himſelf, he will ſit down & wa his couch with tears, but when with the other e he reflecteth upon Jeſus Chriſt, *He will rejo with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*: a Chriſti can both weep and rejoyce at one time, & aga he can rejoyce and weep: No doubt, the refle ing upon the immenſe hope; and that everlaſti crown, will make a Chriſtian rejoyce under his diſquietments & anxieties in the World, can look to the back of time, and behold a glo ous inheritance. A Chriſtian hath the eye of Eagle, that can behold and diſcern things afar

The third duty, that we would preſs upon y is, To long for the day when all the promiſes the Covenant of Grace ſhall receive their co

pleat accompliſhment, and when ye ſhall be entered into the everlaſting fruition of all theſe things wherein your bleſſedneſs lyeth. There is a threefold *come* that Chriſt ſpeaketh of to the ſoul that is united unto him, all which they ſweetly obey. There is that firſt *come*, which is in *Matth.* 11.28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy loaden.* And there is that ſecond *come*, Iſai. 26, *Come, my people and enter into the chambers*, which is, to entertain that excellent correſpondency with him in troubleſome times. And there is a third matchleſs *come*, when Chriſt ſhal ſay to his own in the day of their ſtanding before the Tribunal, *Come, O bleſſed of my Father:* Shal we ſay it, that if we had *Faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, *Why is his chariot ſo long a coming?* And did we reliſh, or made a high account of the matchleſs promiſes of the boundleſs Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ſhips of deſire.* I ſhall ſay no more but this, Chriſt *is gone up with a ſhout* unto Heaven, and ſhal come again *with the ſound of a trumpet ſing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes unto our God, ſing praiſes.*

The laſt thing that we would preſs upon you, is, that ye would mark the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes. And as to this, I ſhal ſay but theſe. 1. That ordinarily the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is the time when ſenſe, reaſon, and probably, doth moſt contradict them: this is clear *Ezek.* 37. in the fulfilling of the promiſes that were paſt to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were *as a*

valley

valley of dead bones, & their hopes were in a m
ner cut off for their part, from the 11. verſ. of t
chap. compared with the 12. And 2. the time
the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ordinarily
a praying time: this is alſo clear from *Dan.* 9. 2.
and from *Jer.* 29. 12. compared with the 11. *Ve*
and the 10. thus ſaith the Lord, the time wh
he will viſite them, and perform his good word
them, in cauſing them to return, it ſhal be a ti
when they ſhal *call upon me, and shal go and pr*
unto me, and I will hearken unto them. And 3.
time of the accompliſhment of his promiſes, i
a time when our thoughts of the promiſes a
high and large, when once we begin to value
mercies, this is a ſign that our mercy is near, a
it is bringing forth: However it is our duty
wait on him who can give a being unto his wo
and ſweetly perform his promiſes. We ought n
to limite infinite wiſdom, nor to ſay unto h
that is infinite in ſtrength, *How can ſuch a thi*
be? but anſwer all objections of misbelief w
this, God hath ſpoken it, and he will alſo do
and drown all our objections of misbelief in t
glorious and myſterious Name of his, *I am t*
I am. To him be praiſe.

SERMON VI.

Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn th*
from darkneſs to light and from the power of S
tan unto God, that they may receive forgive
of ſins, and inheritance amongſt them which
ſanctified by faith that is in me.

When firſt we did begin our diſcourſe up

the precious and excellent grace of Faith; We told you that we intended to ſpeak of it under a twofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, as it layeth hold upon Chriſt for juſtification; and of this we have ſpoken to you at ſome length, as ye have heard. Secondly, as it cloſeth with Chriſt for ſanctification; and of this we are to ſpeak at this time: and have choſen theſe words to ſpeak of it; which are a part of that excellent Oration and diſcourſe that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence: In which Oration and Diſcourſe of his, ye may behold theſe four things eminently ſhining. 1. That Godlineſs and good manners are not inconſiſtent, nor contrary one to another: Therefore ye will ſee in the ſecond and third verſes of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being ſeven dayes in the School of Chriſt, then by being ſeven years in all the Courts of *France*. This ſecondly, That innocent policy that he made uſe of in the deliverance of this Oration, which likewiſe doth appear in the ſecond and third verſe of this Chapter, where he endeavours to inſinuate and ingratiate himſelf in the favours of the perſon before whom he had ſtood. I confeſs, piety is the beſt policy, and it is beſt policy that is taken up in intertaining piety, howbeit true policy may move in one ſphere and ſphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in ſome caſe. 3. This ſhineth in that diſcourſe, even the ſpiritual boldneſs *Paul* had in giving an excellent confeſſion of his faith, in the declaring him to be God, even Jeſus Chriſt

in whom he did believe; Chriſt *witneſſed a glorious confeſſion before* Pontius Pilate for him, and he would witneſs a glorious *confeſſion* before *Agrippa* for Chriſt, that ſince Chriſt had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Chriſt in this day: and this is from the beginning, and all alongs. Laſtly, This ſhineth in the words that *Paul* doth ſet forth, the matchleſs freedome and unſpeakable riches of Chriſt, nor only toward himſelf, in that he did caſt the lot of everlaſting love toward him; but likewiſe toward the *Gentiles*, to whom he was ſent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriouſly condeſcend to viſite the dark places of the earth, and have the *morning ſtar*, and the *day ſpring from on high* ariſing on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verſe which we have read, you may behold theſe five glorious ends of the preaching of the everlaſting Goſpel, for attaining of which, Miniſters are made inſtruments under God. The firſt is, to open the eyes of the blind, which in ſhort is even this, to give thoſe that are ignorant of God the ſpiritual knowledge of the deep myſteries of the Father, and of the Son: So that from this we may ſee that the Goſpel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects above the power of nature. The ſecond we may ſee in theſe words, *remove them from darkneſs to light*; which importeth theſe two: The removing of perſons from an eſtate of miſery, unto an eſtate of excellent joy. 3. The removing of perſons from an eſtate of iniquity, unto an eſtate of holineſs: *darkneſs* in Scripture pointing out ſin, and *light* in Scripture

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pointing out holineſs. 4. The bringing us *from under the power of Satan unto God*, the making a bleſſed exchange of captivity and bondage, that theſe who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love, that thoſe who were under the bondage of ſin, may be under the ſweet obedience of Chriſt, *whoſe yoke is eaſie and whoſe burden is light*, Matth. 11.30.4. that perſons may receive the *remiſſion of ſins, and the forgiveneſs of their iniquity*, This is the great voyce of the Goſpel, come to a crucified Chriſt, come to a pardoning Chriſt, come to a glorified Chriſt, Chriſt hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himſelf in the other, and theſe are the great motives by which he ſtudieth to perſwade us to come. And the laſt is in the cloſe of the verſe, that perſons may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, *and inheritance amongſt them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me*; that is, that they may have a ſhare of that glorious manſion, of that excellent Kingdom that Chriſt hath purchaſed, and gone before to prepare. And withal, in this verſe, as the words are ſet down, ye may ſee the excellent and orderly method that the Goſpel keepeth in conquering ſouls, and you may ſee theſe excellent allurements, theſe perſwaſive arguments that Chriſt holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were. Chriſt cometh not unto us cloathed with Robes of Majeſty: but cloathed with the Robes of Love and advantage, knowing that in this poſture he ſhal moſt gain upon our hearts.

Now in ſpeaking unto that laſt end of the preaching of the Goſpel, we ſhal only acc[illegible]

to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it (not intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel) but as it is a property of Faith: and it is that, *Faith in Jesus Christ hath a noble and excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness, they are sanctified*, saith he, *through faith in me*. We shall not stand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from *Acts* 15.9. where the Apostle telleth us of *purifying their hearts by faith*: And likewise, 1 *Tim.*1.5. where a pure heart and faith unfeigned, they are joyned and linked together. As likewise 1 Joh.3.3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, he purifieth himself*. All the graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and unseparable chain, so that he that obtaineth one, he shall obtain all, yea more, all the graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, so that we may compare them unto *Hypocrates* twains, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together, & they did grow together: even so when one grace doth rejoyce, the rest doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth mourn with it, and when one grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shall insist a little upon. First, we shall shew you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that matchless excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing

ſurpaſſing comlineſs that is in Chriſt, which ſight doth exceedingly perſwade the ſoul to draw that concluſion, *What have I to do anymore with idols?* A glorious ſight of Chriſt, and acquaintance with him, maketh us to loſe our acquaintance with our idols, and when once we are united unto Chriſt by faith, we break that union that we had with them. And indeed, the want of the knowledge of that excellent comlineſs that is in Chriſt, and of love to him, is the great occaſion that the pooreſt deities and idols in the World taketh up your hearts: did ye but once ſee him who is that *glorious Sun of righteouſneſs*, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen*, unto that excellent confeſſion of faith, Eccleſ. 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity, and vexation of ſpirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that diſcovers unto a Chriſtian the ſpotleſs holineſs of Chriſt. Faith doth not only diſcover the beauty of Chriſt, but likewiſe his holineſs, and this doth make the ſoul fall in love with that excellent thing, *ſanctification.* It is recorded amongſt the firſt ſteps to ſin & miſery, that we deſired to be as Gods, knowing good and evil: but certainly it is amongſt the firſt ſteps to life and happineſs, when the ſoul deſireth to be holy, as he is holy. And I ſuppoſe, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a bleſſed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the bleſſed Image of Chriſt, ye know not the beauty of holineſs.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jeſus Chriſt, and draweth ſtrength and vertue from him for conquering of our luſts, and in raiſing us up into a

bleſſed conformity unto himſelf; when the Chriſtian is weak, faith is that noble correſpondent between the emptineſs that is in us, and the fulneſs that is in Chriſt. Faith is that noble correſpondent between that weakneſs that is in us, and that everlaſting ſtrength that is in him. Therefore there are two noble and excellent counſels of faith. Firſt, it counſels us not to lean to our own ſtrength. And ſecondly, to have our recourſe unto him, whoſe Name is *Jehovah*, that *everlaſting ſtrength*. And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Chriſt by Faith, that propheſie ſhould be accompliſhed: *I will make the feeble ones as David: and David as the Angel of God*: And when a Chriſtian is moſt diffident in himſelf, then God ſhould prove himſelf to be Almighty, and All-ſufficient.

And 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promiſes, and doth believe them: and believing of the promiſes bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*, according to that word upon which we were ſpeaking, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. by believing the promiſes, (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith alſo believeth the threatnings that are paſt in Scripture againſt ſin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and ſtrong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification. Faith ſtrengtheneth a Chriſtian againſt the committing of iniquity with theſe two words: that word, *Rom.* 6 20. *O ſoul* (ſaith faith) commit not iniquity, for *the wages of ſin is death*: and that word,

word, *Rev.* 21. laſt, *There ſhal in no way enter into that City, any thing that is unclean or that committeth iniquity*. And be perſwaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of the promiſes that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord not eaſily broken, to reſtrain you from the acting of iniquity: And I ſhall tell you briefly the ground why theſe curſed hearts of ours doth commit iniquity with ſo little fear, and with ſo much delight, it is even this becauſe we believe not the threatnings of God, which ſhall be accomplished in their own ſeaſon: for is it poſſible that if ye believed that word, *Rev.* 21. laſt, *That nothing shal enter into the New Jeruſalem that defileth or worketh abomination or that maketh a lie*; that ye durſt for a World adventure upon the committing of iniquity as ye do. And I ſhall only ſay to ſuch that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming when they ſhall be conſtrained to cry out, *He hath ſpoken it, and he hath done it, and faithful is he*; there is not one jot nor one tittle in the Word of the Lord that ſhall fall to the ground. And believe it, God will be faithful in the accompliſhment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accompliſhment of his promiſes.

6. Faith diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian the noble excellencies, and thoſe ſpiritual dignities that are in that everlaſting eſtate that is provided for the Saints in light. Faith (as it were) carrieth up the ſoul to the top of *Piſgah*, of which it is admitted to behold the *promiſed land*, and truly the ſeeing of theſe noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them ſtudy holineſs,

ſince they know that there is an impoſſibility for one to attain to that eſtate without holineſs, becauſe he hath ſaid it, *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* O then if once ye ſaw heaven, ye would be conſtrained to walk in the path of ſanctification, ſince it is the glorious way by which he muſt walk in thorow the gates of that bleſſed City. But ye know not the excellency that is there, it is a fancy and notion unto you, and that is the ground that ye do not ſtudy to conform your ſelves unto the bleſſed Image of God. And I would only ask you this one queſtion, Is it poſſible that ſuch a deluſion as this can overtake you, as to think, that ye who never ſtudied holineſs on earth, ſhal yet enter into Heavens gates? I know there are ſome that ſay in their heart, *I ſhal have peace though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart*: and many more, that ſuppoſe that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the ſtate of nature, and be compleat in the eſtate of grace all in one day. But why will ye deceive your ſelves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* or is there but one ſtep between Hell and Heaven? O remember though nothing be impoſſible with God, yet there was but one Thief ſaved on the Croſs.

7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holineſs, in this reſpect that it believeth the great advantages that are promiſed unto the perſon that ſtudieth holineſs: Faith believeth that word. Mat. 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for they ſhal ſee God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of his excellent ſayings, and maketh the Chriſtian endeavour

deavour to attain unto a likeneſs and conformity with him, that ſo he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith diſcovereth unto Chriſtians the ſinfulneſs of ſin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exerciſe of the grace of Faith. And I will give you theſe three grounds why faith compleatly diſcovereth the ſinfulneſs of ſin. 1. Faith letteth us ſee the perſon againſt whom we commit this ſin, and that doth exceedingly aggrege ſin, for when the Chriſtian is admitted to behold God, and to ſee that matchleſs excellency that is in him; then (ſaith he) what a beaſt was I to offend ſuch a glorious Majeſty as he? What a fool was I to kick againſt the pricks: or to enter in the liſts with ſuch an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee theſe excellent obligations of love that Chriſt hath impoſed upon us. Faith letteth us ſee the ancient and everlaſting love of Chriſt. Faith is the grace that letteth us ſee his ſufferings. Faith letteth us ſee all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Chriſtian cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwiſe.* And no doubt, if a Chriſtian were more taken up in the ſtudy of this duty, he would be leſs in contracting debt: and were ye but ſeriouſly taken up in the ſtudy of theſe two great Regiſters. 1. That Regiſter in which all the infinit acts of love are recorded. And 2. that Regiſter in which all your acts of offending precious Chriſt are written, ye would be aſtoniſhed, and aſhamed to ſee ſo much forgiven you, and durſt not ſin any more

there; ye would see infinite mercy desiring *to rejoyce over judgement*, and there ye would see the spotless riches of that transcendent grace that is in Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second that we shall speak to concerning faiths influence in the attaining sanctification, shall be to enquire a little into these things that hinder even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith? for some Christians there are that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith, making use of Christ for sanctification; and yet their making use of Christ by faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither yet raise them up to a conformity with God: so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*: and when they fight and doth not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope.*

The first ground of such a dispensation is, that a Christian is not constant in his actings of faith, he will be strong in Faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faint in that exercise, & this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith: for when faith hath gotten its advantages, they loose them through security and negligence: that is a command that should continually be obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant actings of faith, he should sometimes

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ſing that ſong, *I truſted in God, and I was helped.*

Secondly, the moſt part of Chriſtians, they are not ſtrong and vigorous in actings of their Faith; their Faith is exceeding weak, and ſo they cannot bring forth theſe noble fruits and effects of Faith; if we were accompliſhing the work of Faith with power, and if we were truſting in God with all our hearts; then that promiſe in *Pſal.* 37.5. ſhould be accompliſhed to us, *Truſt in the Lord, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Thirdly, there is a ſtrong heart-conjunction and ſoul union between us and our idols: we are joyned to our idols, and therefore we cannot be eaſily divorced, yea, when we are in the heat of the war againſt them, there is a procurator within that cryeth, *O ſpare this little one*; or this *profitable or pleaſant one*: and this is ordinarily, our practiſe to ſpare the choſeſt of our luſts; ſo that our *Agaps* may cry forth, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt.* But I confeſs, if that union were once diſſolved we ſhould then be heard with greater earneſtneſs to cry forth, *O bleſſed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, ſometimes a Chriſtian layeth too much weight upon the acting of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith but as an inſtrument to which Chriſt muſt beſtow ſtrength to conquer. Sometimes we think that Faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand: but remember, Faith is but an empty thing without Chriſt: as ye may ſee, *Acts* 15 9 where the *purifying their hearts* by faith, is aſcribed to the holy Ghoſt: ſo that the activity of faith is from him, and not in its ſelf. Fifthly, a Chriſtian doth not hate ſin with a perfect hatred, even in the

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time of his warfare with his luſts, and with theſe ſtrong idols that are within him, but there is a ſecret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppoſe: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Chriſtian; Sometimes his light will cry, Mortify ſuch an idol, and yet his idol will cry: O ſpare ſuch an idol; yea, more, ſometimes, his heart will cry, Mortify ſuch an idol, and yet his heart will cry; O ſpare ſuch an idol: that is to ſay, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing: O but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of ſin, *Rom.* 12. 9. *Abhor that which is evil.* The word in the Original, hate evil as ye would do hell: that is, have perfect hatred to ſin. O to hate iniquity as much as Hell, and joyn that word, Epheſ. 5. 11, *Reprove the unfruitfull works of darkneſs*: or, as the word may be rendred, *Make out by unanſwerable arguments* to your tentations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitfull works of darkneſs, convince your tentation that you cannot do it: as we ſuppoſe, it was noble arguing of *Joſeph* when he was tempted, *How ſhall I do this?* he put the tentation (as it were) to it: *O* tentation! give me one ground why I ſhould commit ſuch an iniquity: and certainly, if we were thus reaſoning with our tentations, they ſhould flee before us: but the truth is we imbrace the deſire of our tentation upon implicite faith. It is a ſad regrate, & yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God as they do by Satan, we never diſpute the promiſe of Satan, & never examine theſe allurements

ments he ſetteth forth, and yet we conſtantly diſpute with God in every thing. Sixthly, a Chriſtian promoveth not in the growth of ſanctification, though in ſome meaſure exerciſing faith, becauſe he hath not ſuch a heart to holineſs. If we did diſcover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being cloathed with that glorious robe of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and in having the ſweet draughts of the Image of Chriſt engraven upon our hearts, we would have more victory over our luſts: There is a command *for a perfect love* to that Which is good, and holineſs in that ſame place, Rom. 12. 9. and *cleave* (ſaith he) *to that which is good*, or as the word may be rendred, *Be married and glewed* to that which is good, let there be an unſeparable and indiſſolvable knot of union between you and that which is good: And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holineſs, we would endeavour more to be cloathed with it: but that is the great ground why we advance not in holineſs, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made like God. O will ye think on it: What a thing is it for you who are the duſt of his feet, to be made conform to him! Seventhly, a Chriſtian is not much in the exerciſe of other duties that ſhould go along with Faith, ſuſpect that Faith for preſumption, that can act & be maintained without *Prayer*, certainly Prayer it keepeth in the life of Faith: Prayer it is that grace that muſt act mutually with faith, in accompliſhing that bleſſed work of Sanctification: and if we prayed more and believed more, then we ſhould have more to ſpeak concerning

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the victory over our luſts. When was it, O Chriſtian and expectant of Heaven, that ye was conſtrained to put up an *Ebenezar*, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me*? When was it, O Chriſtian and expectant of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath ariſen, and mine enemies are ſcattered before my face.* I will tell you what is your practiſe: ye make ſuch a Covenant with your idols as *Nahash* did with the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, 1 *Sam.* 11. 2. 3. your luſts deſire to make you pluck out your right eyes, & there is nothing your luſts will command you but almoſt ye will obey; but would you ſend our prayer as a meſſenger to tell the King of ſuch tyranny, ye ſhould know better what it is to be victorious. There is ſuch a Covenant between the graces of the ſpirit, eſpecially between Faith and Prayer (if ſo we may allude) as was made between *Joab* & *Abishai*, 2 *Sam.* 10. 11. one grace as it were ſaith to another, if I be weak, *come over and help me*: & if ye be weak, *I will come and help you*. When one grace is like to fall in battel, then another grace cometh and helpeth it; when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in, & ſweetly helpeth faith, when love is beginning to die, and wax cold in the fight, then faith cometh in & puteth life in love; & when patience is like to fall and be overcome, then *faith* comes in & ſpeaks that word to patience, *Wait on God, for I ſhal yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Oftentimes our patience & our ſenſe they joyn together, for when ſenſe ſpaketh good things, patience is in life; but when once ſenſe preacheth hard things, it is

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like to die, & faith muſt then maintain & uphold it.

The third thing that we ſhal ſpeak as to Faiths influence upon Sanctification, ſhall be to draw theſe four concluſions from the point.

The firſt is, That ye may know from this the riſe & original of your little ſucceſs over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this queſtion: Q! what is the ground that I get not victory over my luſts: and they propoſe that queſtion to Chriſt, that once the diſciples propoſed to him, *Why was it that I could not caſt out ſuch a Devil?* And I can give no other anſwer nor Chriſt gave to them, it is becauſe ye have not faith: *for if ye had faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, ye might ſay unto your idols, depart from us, and they ſhould obey you, and there ſhould not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven: but if ye had Faith, it ſhould be rould away, and become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, That they are not much in the exerciſe of faith: ſometimes ye enter in the liſts with your luſts in your own ſtrength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the liſts having ſome Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one ſtroak.

I will tell you ſix things, which if Faith overcome, it keepeth the fields, and maketh the Chriſtian ſing a ſong of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Chriſtian to overcome that idol of Impatience and Diſcontent, ſome never meet with a diſcouragement, but they cry out:

This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer: they are soon put to the end of their patience: Now Faith can overcome such an idol, and I will tell you three excellent things tha faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. Faith telleth the Christian, *there is an end*, and their *expectation shall not be cut off*. Faith telleth that there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the midnight of trouble. Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, and how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break, and all their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have; if ye lose your son, or your choisest contentment in the World, Faith will say to you such a word as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Is not Christ better to thee then ten sons*: The choisest contentments ye can loose (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them: and so this maketh the soul be ashamed of their impatiency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends it hath; our advantage as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end: and there is not a dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark

dispensation,

diſpenſation, let Faith interpret it, for it is only the beſt interpreter of dark diſpenſations: for if ye meet with ſenſe, this is its interpretation, he is not chaſtening me in love, but puniſhing with the wound of an enemy, but Faith will propheſy good things to you in the darkeſt night.

The ſecond next great idol that Faith will bring low, is that idol of covetouſneſs and deſire to the things of the World. I think that word, *Eccl.* 3. 11. was never ſo much accompliſhed, as it is in theſe dayes, and amongſt you, *He hath ſet the world in your hearts*; that is, the idol that dwelleth and lodgeth within you, yea, the world it hath your firſt thoughts in the morning, and your laſt thoughts at night; yea more, it hath your thoughts when ye are at Prayer, & when ye are at Preaching. yea it hath ſuch a dominion over you that it giveth you as it were, a new Bible, and in all the ten Commands ſcrapeth out the name of God, and ſetteth down the World. And whereas God ſaith, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me*, the World ſaith, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me, &c.* But faith will bring this idol low, and ſoon let you ſee the vanity and emptineſs of it, yea faith would let you ſee a more noble object, and withal, diſcover unto you how ſhort your time is, and how few hours ye have to ſpend in following after lies. And I am perſwaded of this, that if ye could win to ſhake hands with cold death every day, and ſay, thou at laſt ſhall be my Prince, and ſhall be the King to whom I ſhall be a ſubject, and if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching: it would be a mean

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to mortifie these pursuits after the World: and I shal say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain alwayes such thoughts of the world; as he shal have when he is standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity. I shal say it, and believe it. O worlding, and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come, that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the World, as those that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that Faith will bring low, is, that idol of *self-love* and *self-indulgence*, that which is the great-mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be said against that idol of self love and self-indulgence, that which is in 2 *Tim.* 3.2. were sufficient, that amongst all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the first place, *they shal be lovers of themselves:* we cannot take pains for Christ, we cannot go about the exercise of any duty, because that idol of self indulgence forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counsel & great advice it giveth you, *O person pity thy self* that same counsel *Peter* gave his Master, it biddeth you pity your self. But if we could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *destroy your self.*, for *self indulgence* and *self-love*, is that which will ruine you. O what blessed attainment of God; what blessed fruitions of Jesus Christ, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God, hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and *only not* utterly ruined, even in the best? I think, if once ye could set your foot upon that idol the rest should fall apace, that is the g-

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neral of all the forces of your luſts and it is a *Saul*, the head higher then the reſt of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will ſubdue, is ſelf-righteouſneſs, this is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteouſneſs, and ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and the great ground of it is, That there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of works, and we never deſire to be much oblidged to any other, we cannot ſubmit our ſelves to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

The fifth great idol that faith can ſubdue, is that of *pleaſure*, the world and the contentments of it: *Pleaſure* is the great idol that many worſhip and adore: there are ſome that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleaſures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low of ſuch an idol; for faith diſcovereth to a ſoul more excellent pleaſures, more ſweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun: Faith maketh a Chriſtian loſe his taſte unto all things that are here below: Faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold theſe paſſing vanities, thoſe tranſciant delights of a preſent evil world.

Our ſecond concluſion is this, that Faith helpeth Sanctification, ſo Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages faith hath by the growth & exerciſe of Sanctification. 1. It is a noble evidence of Faith, and maketh a Chriſtian to be perſwaded that he is ſetled upon the Rock, and that his intereſt in God is made

ſure.

sure Sanctification is that which will help a Ch
stian daily to read his interest in God; this
clear from *Jam.*2. 18. *I will shew thee my faith*
my works, where this is clearly holden forth, th
a Christian much in the work of Sanctificatio
he can upon all times give an extract of his fait
and, as it were, discover it and shew it to t
World. 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, a
cording to that remarkable word, Jam.2.22. *A*
by works was faith made perfect. There is a nob
perfection that redoundeth to Faith through t
exercise of the work of Sanctification; for not o
ly is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth suc
a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometime
the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold
Believer, but it also receiveth strength and powe
Faith is not of the nature of these things th
spend themselves in bringing forth; but on th
contrary, if Faith bring forth an hundred childre
(I mean works of holiness) in one day it grow
eth stronger: and this is further clear, 2 Pet. 1.
For if these things be in you, and abound, ye sha
neither be barren nor unfruitful. And from th
other word, *Jam.* 2. where is said, *That fai*
without works is dead, being alone: if Faith be a
lone, it wants its spiritual life and vigour; but i
ye were much in the exercise of the work of San
ctification, ye would, no doubt, attain to a nob
and lively acting of that grace of Faith. And la
ly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanc
fication, there will be a comfortable exercise o
Faith: Sometimes Faith is exercised with muc
anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting; b
Fai

aith and a poor Conſcience joyned together, ey make an excellent feaſt, and maketh a Chri- ian rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of lory.

Thirdly, we may draw this concluſion, If faith ave influence upon the work of Sanctification, d helpeth the producing of a noble conformity God, then, I ſay, there are many that their faith a deluſion, and *there hope ſhal be cut off as a ſpi- rs web.* There are ſome that have faith, that ve not Sanctification, nor knowes not what it and ſhall not that faith unqueſtionably *perish a dream, and evaniſh as the viſion of the night?* d therefore if ye would teſtifie the reality of ur faith. then ſtudy more the work of Sanctifi- tion. I ſhall but from *Job* 8. 14. 15. give you eſe eight properties of a hypocrites faith and ope, which may make you try & examine your lf. 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of lly, yea, there is not ſuch an act of foolifhneſs nder Heaven, as a hypocrites hope; becauſe it is ut a caſtle in the air, and as writing to himſelf a arter on the ſand: ſo that word ye have render. whoſe *hope ſhall be cut off*, is in the Original, *hoſe folly ſhal be cut off*: ſhewing this, that they uild without a foundation, and ſo their faith muſt e moſt unſure and uncertain. 2. The thing they ope for, ſhal at laſt loath them: O hypocrites, ye ope for enjoyment of Chriſt, but be perſwaded f it, Chriſt ſhal eternally loath you, and ye ſhall ternally loath Chriſt: that is clear in the ſame ord, *whoſe hope ſhal be cut off*, or as the word ay be read, *whoſe hope ſhal loath them*, the thing

be

he hoped for ſhal loath him, and Chriſt ſhal ſa
Depart, I know you not. 3. And though ye ha
now much delight and pleaſure in the actings
your preſumptuous hope, yet at the laſt, ye ſha
loath that hope: The word will carry, that n
only the things ye hoped for ſhal loath you, but
likewiſe ſhal loath your hope. The day is comi
that ye ſhal cry forth, curſed be the day that e
I believed that I ſhould get heaven. 3. It ſhal
laſt be the matter of his vexation, from that wor
whoſe hope shal be cut off; or as the word may
rendred, *whoſe hope shal vex him*. O when the h
pocrites ſhal meet with that anxious, that drea
full diſappointment one day, they ſhall then p
their hand on their head, being aſhamed becau
of their confidence. 4. He ſtudieth by all mea
to keep his hope, though it be but falſe; therefo
have ye that word in the 15. ver. *he holdeth it fa*
or as the word is, he *keepeth it with hand and ar*
with all his ſtrength he keepeth his hope: ſo th
if Chriſt would come from heaven, & ſay, *ma*
thou art a hypocrite, and thy *hope shal be cut o*
they would ſay, I will keep my hope, Sir, a
maintain it, and that is an evidence your hope
not built upon the foundation; I love never
Faith that in this ſide of time is unchangeable,
never knoweth what it is to have ups nor down
5. It is built alwayes upon a wrong foundatio
which is imported in that word, *He shal lean upo*
his houſe, which we ſuppoſe may be interpret th
he ſhal lean upon his worldly enjoyments, or u
on theſe ſpiritual-like enjoyments he met wit
The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Chri
an

nd ſo unqueſtionably that hope ſhal be cut off & evaniſht. 6. Let hypocrites hold faſt their hope with both their arms, I will ſay theſe three words o them. Firſt, if all the Miniſters ſhould preach o you, and deſire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you ſhal be ſepaate: as it is in that word, *Your hope ſhall depart rom you*, and ye ſhal quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to *death*, and no further: According ng to that word. *Job* 18.14. *Whoſe hope ſhal bring im to the* King *of terrors:* Will it bring me no urther ſay you? O no, *The* King *of terrors ſhall eparate you and your hope.* Thirdly, the day is com- ng when the foundation of it ſhal be diſcover- d, and there ſhal not be a deluſion but it ſhal be nfolded. The day is approaching when Chriſt hal ask how you got your Faith, and how you naintained it? 7. The hypocrites hope is poor uilding, it is as a *ſpiders web:* which I conceive without being critick) is this, The hope of hyocrites they ſpin out of their own bowels, they ave it not from Chriſt, but as ye ſee a Spider pin out of its own bowels, ſo do they out of themlves, it is no better ſtuff then their own rotten ghteouſneſs. Chriſt never begat thoſe unto a vely hope. Let me beſeech you therefore, that y all means ye would ſtudy to make ſure your tereſt in God, and to build your faith on him, hoſe Name is that *munition of rocks*, for beeve it, I may ſay it with much perſwaſion, I now there are many that ſhal once meet (if God erent it not) with a dreadful diſappointment: d therefore as ye would not incur that eternal

hazard

hazard that is attending thoſe that preſumptu
ſly take hold of a hope, before Chriſt take h
of them, ſtudy to ſearch your hope what it i
deſire not to raze any foundation of their h
that is laid by the hand of Chriſt, but would
ſire and charge you, to raze the foundation of
hope which ye have laid from the beginnin
your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would
theſe three things upon you. First, O ye that
ſtrangers to Chriſt, and that know not what
to embrace the offers of the everlaſting Goſ
obey that excellent counſel, 2 Chron. 30.8. G
Chriſt your hand; for that word which ye h
rendered, *Yeeld your ſelf to the Lord*, it is in
original, *Give your hand to God*; which i
ſhort, *marry him*, and be content *to contract y
ſelf to him*: for believe it, the day is coming,
either that contract between you and Chriſt,
be eternally confirmed, or that contract betw
the Devil and you ſhal be eternally ratified. A
ſuppoſe, there is ſo much ſpoken to the comm
dation of that *noble plant of renown*, that ye
take Chriſt (if ſo we may ſpeak) blindly, ye
cloſe your eyes and take him, for he ſhal ne
diſapoint your hope; for let you think of him
eternity, he ſhal always be above your thoug
Secondly, I would earneſtly deſire you onc
ſearch and try, what was the firſt riſe of your f
in Jeſus Chriſt: I am perſwaded of it, there
many that take up their faith at their foot,
never travelled in pain, and yet faith is bro
forth: Is not this a myſtery? Shall it be
before they travelled, they brought forth? I do
que

ueſtion but there may be leſs and greater paags
f the new birth; but this is moſt certain, there
alwayes ſome either leſſer troubles or grea er,
ll that child be brought forth: and yet I may
ondemn *theſe that ſtay too long in the place of the*
eaking forth of children. Chriſt will never re-
ſe you when ye do really come, becauſe you
ve not been ſo many years and days in priſon to
e law. Thirdly, let me deſire you to go and ask,
there a grave between you and Heaven, in all
at way thorow which the Saints have travelled,
on which this is writ en, Here lieth a man that
cerely ſought life from Chriſt, and be deaved
m? I think without encreaching too much up-
the ſearching forth of the exerciſe of the Sa nts
Heaven, I think we may ſuppo e there may
in Heaven, ſome *queries* and *interrogations*:
riſt ſhall ask, *O beloved, did ye want any thing*
e below, when ye was ſent forth to travel in the
rld? And ye ſhal be conſtrained to anſwer. *Na.*
riſt ſhal ask that queſtion at you. *Did I not all*
ngs well? And ye ſhal be conſtrained to anſwer,
s Chriſt ſhal propoſe that queſtion. *Are ye not*
ll rewarded for all your pains? And you ſhal be
nſtrained to anſwer, *Yes O* but to take him, he
the beleſſed and moſt excellent One in heaven
in earth, it is the beſt bargain ever ye made.
ye merchants, that have made many excellent
gains to your own apprehenſion, will ye come
d make one excellent bargain yet, that will make
u eternally up. And what is that? come and
Chriſt, and take him for nothing. This is not
ur ordinary bargaining: There is few comes

to you, and biddeth you buy *excellent things wi*
o u money; but come in the Gospel, & ye shal g
Christ *without money*. O niggards! that are loa
to spend your mony in the World, will ye co
to Christ and believe on him, take him freely.
say ye, if I could get three things of Christ,
would come. 1. I would have much gold & s
ver. I say, come to Christ, and ye shall get mu
gold and silver Is that true? It is abundantly tru
See Job 22.25.26. where pressing that exhorta
on, *Acquaint thy self with God*; & using many a
guments, he saith, *Thou shalt lay up gold as dust,*
the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Is th
not gold enough? yea, ye shal have silver likewi
Thou shalt have plenty of silver. In the 26. v.
shal not only have gold and silver, but shal ha
plenty of it, and shal have the most excellent a
refined gold. But O, say ye, will that promise
literally accomplished to me, if I come to Chr
I would only say these three things to th
1. Come to Christ, and if gold & silver be for
advantage, thou shalt have it literally accompli
ed. 2. I say, ye shal have as much contentment
Jesus Christ, as if ye had this house full of go
3. I will say this to thee, Christ shal be thy go
and thy silver: according to that word in the 26.
which is most remarkable; yea, *the Almighty sh*
be thy defence; or as it is in the Original, *shal*
thy gold, speaking of the promise of gold befo
Secondly, ye say, I would have this, that wha
purpose might be accomplished. I say, come
Christ, and ye shal have that likewise, *Job* 22.
Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shal be establis
un

un to thee: which I conceive, doth not only take in these spiritual decrees; but likewise these that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (say ye) and I would come to Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of my heart. I say, O man! &, O woman! come to Christ, and thou shalt have what thou desireth: this is clear from Psal. 37. 5. *Delight thy self in God, and he shal give thee the desires of thine heart.* What can ye have, man, but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Christ? He putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to *Solomon*, *Ask*, what would ye have, & I shal give you? Christ, as it were putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and he desireth you to ask what you would have: And is not this an excellent bargain? O nigard! what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded, that ye that refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in Heaven, will return upon thy head: the eternal curse of all the expectants of Heaven & heirs of life, will return upon the head of that person that will not take Christ. And cursed cursed shal that person be who wil not take Christ, & one day *all the Congregation* in Heaven and Earth shall say, *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Assurance is a precious gift which many th
live in these days do undervalue, and tre
under foot: do not the Christians of these tim
go halting between two opinions, being neith
positive that they are received *into the adoption*
children, nor positive that they are yet in a state
alienation, *and enemies in their minds by wick*
works; yea, and (that which is worse) there
many amongst us that walk with much conte
ment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fa
to be condemned in many, they pursue more
satisfy their sense for the present, not to have a
lide well grounded assurance for time to come:
could wish that all the debats and questions
these dayes, that take up so much of our time,
so much of our spirits for better things, were h
pily drowned in these four excellent question
which without controversy, are of greatest co
cernement for all to have resolved. 1. Where s
I rest at night when the long shadows of the ev
lasting evening shall be stretched out upon me
and whether or no hath Christ gone before
take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2.
is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what sha*
do to inherit eternal life? to be asking at him th
can sweetly resolve you. And 3. not to rest the
but to be crying forth in the morning, *What sh*
I doe to satisfie and to be crying out in the eve
ing, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It
sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw ye him wh*
my soul loveth. There is much of our time sp
in asking news from Court, and from abro
concerning the revolutions of States and Ki
dom

oms: but I suppose, it were better to ask, what ews from heaven concerning thy self, and what ews from within, and news of thy bridegrooms oming? for these are great Courts, I mean the Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience, he affairs of which a Christian should endeavour uch to know. 5. It is a soul-concerning que- ion, that a Christian should be much in propo- ng to himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord r all his benefits?* It is certain we must say, that ur Faith and assurance, and all our other mer- es are from him, and yet alace! we are negli- ent in his praises: we may with *Tamar*, rent ur garments of diverse colours, even the *gar- ents of the Kings daughters*, because of spiritual horedom against God, and our ingratitude to im.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a ngth of that precious and fundamental grace of ith, we have thought fit to shut up all in spea- g a little upon these words we now have read, ncerning the evidence and assurance of Faith. he Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his inistery and Apostleship, from the contempt at was cast upon it: he proveth he was a Mini- r of the New Testament, called and sent of od, by the blessing and success he had amongst em, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in ain; and they being so much in censuring his ay, and seeking an account of his Ministery. In ese words, he doth (as it were) draw them off y a holy diversion unto another business, as if he d said to them, O *Corinthians*, I will divert you

from the exercise of judging me, & will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable: be much in judging and examining yourselves: and indeed, it is a truth worth our observation, that if we were more in judging of ourselves, we would be less in judging others: but alace! there are some of us, we are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable. First, That there is such a thing attainable a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance *that he is in the faith*, and hath an interest in Christ. *By being in the faith*, here not to be understood, a being in the doctrine *faith* only, but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed, and really united to Christ faith. Secondly, that the seeking after assurance a necessary commanded duty; for ye see here words very imparative, *Examine your selves, your selves.* Thirdly, That there are many mistakes and delusions amongst people, concerning that noble and excellent thing *assurance*; there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ once discountenance, and sweep away, like *ders web*, and this is imported in these words *Examine your selves*, or as the words may be dered, *Take an accurate and experimented search your selves: try your selves or prove your selves* is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smithing and trying of gold. And so his putting of *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves faith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do pass a decree

their own favors, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, Take notice of this from the words, that there is much and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the Faith or no, this is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, That one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the faith or no, is self examination, and putting our self to the tryal; as if he had said, Would you have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, we intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable*, I shall only propose these reasons unto you, to make it evident. 1. It is known in Scripture, that the Saints of old have in an ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, 2 *Song* 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*: and *Rom.* 8. 38. *I am perswaded* (saith the Apostle) *that neither death, nor life, &c shal be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ.* And 2 Cor. 5 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God not made with hands eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures to show how many Christians may attain to assurance. 1 J*o.* 1. 13. *These things I write unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of *John*, writing in these Epistles, is to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many

commands in Scripture for Christians, to b serious in searching after assurance, 2 *Pet.* 1. *Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make calling and election sure.* 4. It is the blessed of Gods oath in the everlasting Covenant, tha Christian might get assurance. What was ground and great end that God confirmed his C venant with an oath, *Heb.* 6.18. was it not, *by two immutable things, wherein it was impos for God to lie, ye might have strong consolatio* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were attainable, then these precious graces of joy, joy could not be well exercised; if a Chris were evermore in the dark concerning his inter in Christ, he could not give obedience to t exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoy* 6 The Scripture hath set down these means which a Christian may win to assurance: as clear, 1 *John* 3 18.19. 2 *Pet.* 4. 5. compared w *vers.* 10. where the Apostle *Peter* pressing doctrine of making our calling and election su he setteth down these excellent means by wh they may win to it, and doubtless the marks a evidents that are registrate in the Scripture o gracious state, do assure us that assurance is attai able. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments, b that our assurance may be confirmed, and that o faith may be strengthened: the two Sacrame are the two great seals of Heaven that are put t the charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, and the more s improvement of this first point, I shall only o these considerations. 1. I would have it ta

not

notice of that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such band of union between them, that the one cannot consist without the other; a Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and have no light: a Christian may be going to heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from his sight*, yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and sometime a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out *my hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it, when ye miss assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces; but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that is when ye cannot reach the Faith of assurance, be much on maintaining of adherence: remember Jobs divinity, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee:* & consider that sweet word, *he will keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out & remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this; we conceive, that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two, 1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And 2. Our

our untender & unsuitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you the five, The first is, want of favourable returns prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debat his interest, and call in question his evidences *Lam.* 3.8. compared with vers. 18. *I cry & shou but he shutteth out my prayers:* and this is the con clusion of that dispensation, vers. 18. *My hope & my strength is perished from the Lord:* and this i especially occasioned when the Christian is mo serious and fervent in prayer, & then he meets not with a return, this maketh them exceedin debat their interest. And I confess, it is a sad d pensation to meet with a silent Christ in praye but yet that needeth not make a believer questi all, and debate the reality of his interest in God since the dearest of all the children of the Kin dom have been so dealt with, even a *David*, P 12. *Cryed night and day without silence*, and is n heard, but cryeth out, *Why art thou so far fro helping me, and from the words of my roaring*; yea that passage may relate to him who was the ro *and off spring of David*; for even he was so deal with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, *that the cup might pass from him.*

Secondly, The want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that he never goeth to hi knees, but his heart beginneth to dye like a ston within him, then he cryeth forth the word, 2 Co 3. 17. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is li berty*; and sure, if I had the Spirit of the Lord I would have liberty in the exercise of praye

and that this is a rise of the disputing of our interest, is clear from *Psal.* 77,4. compared with ver. 7. and 9. saith *David, I am sore troubled that I cannot speak.* I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth: he from hence draweth a conclusion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever?* I confess, this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and vailed Christ in prayer, so that we can never go to seek God in secret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *Davids* perplexity much lightened, *vers.* 5. 6. from his *remembring his song in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times:* yet we may remember how soon *David* wrote his retractions, as to that sad conclusion, I *said this is my infirmity*, vers. 10. and so should we do when upon every straiting in prayer, we begin to question all the Lords kindness toward us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions painfully and seriously, and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them, but upon the contrary, their corruptions seem to be stronger, and they themselves seem to be weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, by that word, 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* And indeed this is a knot that is not easily loosed, but when he seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will

will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Israel concerning this age*, and yet this also is a word in haste. *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness, even after he was a chosen vessel *Rom.* 7. How strangely a child of God may be borne down with a body of death, even under most serious wrestlings against it: And therefore if thou do seriously maintain the combate, though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly, when a Christian is put to more than ordinary outward affliction, when God doth dispence sadly unto them in outward things, then they begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance, this is clear by comparing *Lam.* 3. *vers.* 18. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they met with he draweth that conclusion in *vers.* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord:* & *Jonah* 2. 3. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight*, the Devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity and presents it to a Christian, *call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go*; as if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted as thou art afflicted, and so he would have *Job* quite his integrity: But yet we know all the blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him, yea, as *many as he loved, he doth rebuke and chasten*, and it is the bastards and not sons, on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of affliction.

And lastly, the rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their assurance, is when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built become tasteless unto them, *as the white of an egge*, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them, their case becomes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *Davids* case, *Psal.* 77. When *he remembred his song in the night, and the dayes of old*, and yet had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed: but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such an account; because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best: and the Lord is not always present, but though sometimes the *candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head*, yet at other times he is necessitate to cry out: *O that it were with me as in moneths past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christians assurance, I mean such as flow from our untender dealing toward God, are.

First, a guilty conscience, that is a remarkable word, 1 *Tim.* 3 19. *Holding the mystery of Faith in a pure conscience.* It telleth us, that this excellent grace of Faith, cannot abide but in a cleanly lodging, even in a pure conscience: and when a Christian setteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out,

O adventure

O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe; the guiltineſs of a Chriſtians conſcience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain, leſt thou be thruſt thorrow:* And I tell you three diſadvantages of a guilty conſcience. 1. It obſtructeth a Chriſtians boldneſs, in making applications to Chriſt, his heart ſaith cloſe, and his neceſſity ſaith cloſe; but his guilty conſcience cryeth out. *O ſtand aback*, and do not *cloſe*. 2. A guilty conſcience oftentimes it hindereth the diſcoveries of Chriſt to the ſoul, and doth ſo affright and terrify, yea it will ſo ſting and bite us, that when he revealeth himſelf we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaiſter on our ſouls, will tear it *off and refuſe to be comforted.* 3 It doth exceedingly obſtruct our going about duty. O but our ſouls moves ſlowly in the path of God when we are under the power of a guilty conſcience.

The ſecond obſtruction is, that we are not much in the exerciſe of tenderneſs. O but if a Chriſtian were tender, and if in every ſtep of his life he deſired to walk with Chriſt, and in every ſtep of his life he deſired to *ſet Chriſt before his eyes*, he would eaſily win to much aſſurance, according to that word, *Iſai*, 64. 5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoyceſt and worketh righteouſneſs, and thoſe that remember thee in thyways:* would ye know the aſſured Chriſtian, it is the tender Chriſtian; the Chriſtian that doth not crucify convictions; the Chriſtian that breaketh not reſolutions, the Chriſtian that doth not ſit *calls* and opportunities to prayer, the Chriſtian that ſaith not of any ſin, *it is a little one*; or the Chriſtian that ſearcheth his

wayes,

ways, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always casting out sin, that is the assured Christiā.

The 3. obst. is the want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodness, this is clear from that word, *Psalm* 25. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew to them his Covenant.* I think there are these two great evidences, that much of the power of godliness is gone from some of our hearts: we fear God no more, nor if we were his companion; 2. And we fear our selves no more, nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us, we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us.

The fourth thing that doth much obstruct our assurance, is *much worldly mindedness*, & too eager pursuit after the things of a present life: that is remarkable, 2 *Cor.* 4. v. last compared with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not unto the things that are seen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present World, which the men of the World seek and delight themselves in: and it is subjoyned, *For we know if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*, so we see assurance & mortification to the World, are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts? The most part of us are conversing with idols of the World. Would ye know where to find our hearts? They are among the vanities of the World. O how true is that word, Psalm 39. *Man walks in a vain shew*: What is man all his actings, but as one walking in a long gallery

gallery that is set about with pictures, gazing
these things, and saluting them all, as if they
living Kings and Queens and great persons
could do him good, and so our pursuing af
World, is nothing else but *a dead shadow* p
ing after *dead shadows*: a man that is but a
living shadow pursuing after vanity and noth
and this he fools away his time, forgetting
make sure the one thing necessary.

Fifthly, want of distinct apprehensions of t
three, the infinit love of Christ, the infinite po
of Christ, and the infinite wisdom of Christ: t
is not an objection, O Christians, that ye h
from the multitude of your sins, but it may
drowned in infinite love; there is not an objec
ye have concerning the strength of your idols,
it may be drowned in that immense Ocean o
infinit power of Christ: there is not an objec
ye have for your wants, or about your evil na
but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdome
goodness of Christ, & there can be nothing aga
your assurance, but may be sweetly answered
from these rightly applyed, taken up, and re
on by the soul. The last thing that hindereth
assurance, is the smalness of the measure of gr
that we have attained; for when grace is small,
is hard to be discerned, and therefore if we wo
have assurance, learn not to ly still and disp
but to rise up and to increase our stock, and
you shal know ye are rich, *Grow in grace and
knowledge of God*, and by this ye *shal know
follow on to know the Lord.*

The third consideration is, that assuran

bestowed at all times: but there are some cial times and seasons when God giveth a ristian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and ist and he joynes hands together, even then times the best robe is put on upon the pro- al son, and the fatted Calf is killed, and a ring ut upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet. *Acts* 9.17. *Paul* meeteth with assurance immedi- after his conversion, 1 *John* 2.12. 14. *I write to you, little children, because your sins are for- en you*; so that when a Christian is brought o Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the gisters of heaven, & say, friend, come and see, e is your name written from eternity: But do mistake me, I do not say this is always so, but se whom Christ converteth through the thun- ings of the Law, these most frequently meet h intimation of the pardon of their sins and ce of God, even at their first acquaintance. I ow there are some Christians, that if ye ask at m when they were begotten to a lively hope, y would say that word that the blind man once , *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now e*, but for the time and the day, I know not en it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling h God like Princes in prayer, and watching o that exercise, *Dan.* 9.23. compared with the ceeding verse, he being much and serious in yer, doth meet with that word from Heaven: *man greatly beloved*; or as the word is, *O man*

of

of desires, and *Acts* 10. 2. 3. 4. when *Cornel* much in exercise of watching and prayer, he a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace God; and *Jacob* when he was wrestling Christ, *Gen.* 32. he hath that testimony him, *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with G prevailed.*

The third thing is, when a Christian is p through the gates of death, and is upon the ders of Eternity, I desire not to be mistak this neither; I know some Christians are l Heaven thorow a dark trance, so as they neve a blink of the countenance of Christ, until day come that they get him in their arms nally within his Fathers house. Some Chri when they go through the gates of death, may be disputing of this question, *Where going*; but this is certain, that sometimes, oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight Christians interest unto him at the day of de 2 *Sam.* 25 5. when was it that *David* sang song, which hath strengthened thousands i very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an lasting Covenant*, was it not when death was ing-hands with him? and 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. Whe it that *Paul* sang that song, *I fought the goo of faith, I have finished my course, henceforth i up for me a Crown of righteousness*, was it not then when he was ready to *depart, and to be up*? And when was it when old *Simeon* di that blessed song, Luke 2. 29. *Now letteſt th servant depart in peace: for my eyes have se salvation*, was it not within a step of death

ere, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, d found Christ before him, and so death to *Si-on* was a change of his place, and not a change his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to ne hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* be to forsake his native Land, and become a anger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet imation of his interest, *Gen.* 12. 2. *I will make hee a great nation*: and v. 7. *The Lord appeared* Abraham: and before *Jeremiah* be sent a acher to a rebellious people, he will have that rd spoken unto him, *I know thee before thou st brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done ne singular act of obedience, when *Abraham* d obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his interest Covenant renewed to him with an oath, *Gen.* . 16. *By my self have I sworn, because thou hast e this thing, and hast not with holden thy son, n thy only son, blessing I will b ss thee, and ltiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of aven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet h hard tryals, difficulties, and afflictions in World, then they usually meet with assurance, so, *Gen.* 28. 14 15. 16. before *Jacob* go to serve *ban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace h God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is un- a sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord

Lord give a word from Heaven to comfor
and assure him of his Fatherly love and m
When was it that Christ left that noble le
his disciples, Joh. 14. v. 27. *My peace I leav*
you, my peace I give you, was it not when h
self was to leave them to troublesome a
rowful dayes in a persecuting world?

The eighth time is, at some solemn Ord
ces and approaches to God, the dayes of a
munion to a tender Christian have been
days, when Christ hath come to the soul, an
Behold me, behold me. I think the eleven Ap
met with much assurance of their inter
Christ at the communion they were at with
O what sweet intimations were these, *This*
Body which is broken for you; and *this Cup*
New Testament in my blood shed for you: and
tle after, *you are they which have continued wit*
in my tentations, & I appoint unto you my king

We come now to the second point whic
proposed from the words, *viz.* That as assu
is a thing which may be attained, so to seek
it, is a necessary duty: let me not be mistake
if I said, the having of assurance were simpl
cessary to Salvation: no, that were a doctr
comfortless upon the other hand, as the P
doctrine of the impossibility of assurance is
the other. But the thing I say, is that the C
ans seeking after assurance, & his real endea
ing to attain unto it, is a necessary comma
God which he hath bound upon the consci
of his children amongst other Gospel duties;
certainly, we need go no further for the cle

bis then the Text it self; what meaneth these
mptory instructions, *Examine your selves
ther ye be in the faith or not: Prove your selves;
w ye not, &c.* but if ye will, you may adde
word, 2 *Pet.* 1. *vers.* 5. and 10. compared,
t can be more expresly commanded, and
e strongly pressed, then that Christians
ld bend their uttermost endeavours for attain-
nto this blessed condition of assurance: *Give
ence,* yea, *the rather giving all diligence to
your calling and election sure.*

om this, we shall only lay before you these
derations: 1. If the seeking after assurance
necessary duty, then these three things are
lamentable. First, that there are so many in
Generation *who are pure in their own eyes, &
re not washed from their iniquity*; they flatter
selves with a rotten assurance, that hath no
r foundation but their own imagination: they
er knew since the first day they were baptized
did begin to profess Christ, what it was to
nify one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against
tentation, and yet they want not a strong per-
ion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will ye
in aw, lest ye meet with such a dreadful dis-
intment, as (when ye think ye are in the
gate of Heaven) even then to fall backwards
e very bottom of Hell: and when we expect
dly welcome from the Lord of glory, as one
thinks you have been in Covenant with him
many years, ye meet with that dreadful sum-
s, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*
How sad may we be upon this account, that

how

howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, great many dare not say they have attained it so little diligence is used in pursuing after it: not very lamentable, that many of you to I am speaking, since first ye gave up your to Christ in a visible way, and were repu mongst the generation of the seekers of his scarce ever set a day or an hour apart to exa whether ever indeed ye were in Christ o Alace, is Heaven of so little moment? Is th ing or wanting all the enjoyments whi there, of so smal concernment to you, that y not be at the pains as once to enquire afte interest in the matter? What if any of you but possessors of a thousand pound, and o interest or right unto it uncertain and qu able, would not your sleep depart from you your rest be unquiet till you had made it secure? What think you shal the men of th neration answer in the day of the Lord, n glecting *that one thing necessary*, when they been so vexing themselves *about many thin* have been so serious in so many cosoltatio make sure a worm-eaten portion in a per world, that the whole wit of men and ange not secure for one moment? It is certain, th of all this sloathfulness is Atheism: It is n sible that we believe as really there is a hea we believe there is an earth, or that the w come is as real as that which is present; o must be a strange power in these lusts tha us captive, that we are never suffered t upon eternity, nor to ask where we mu

hen this cottage we carry about shal fall about
r ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious &
sing that command is, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Give all*
igence to make your calling and election sure.
en the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye
e no diligence? And when he saith, *make your*
ling and election sure, will ye leave all upon un-
tainty? *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly.*
. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is
inable, yet men live so contentedly under the
t thereof: How strange is it that many are so
ome on their knees complaining of their un-
tainty? If Christ were precious unto you;
uld it be so? I am sure there are some of us
e that have had the name of Christians; I
w not how long, that never had one sad
ught about the want of assurance: when we
t upon the desolations, vastations and plunde-
s in the World, how many of us can cry out,
y have taken away my Gods, and what have I
e? But when we speak of heaven, we care not
deprive us of our portion there. I will not li-
e the Lord, nor determine what he may do:
believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many
istians of this age have a pleasant night and
fortable closing of their eyes, they are such
rvaluers of assurance: I may fear, that lamen-
n shal be heard upon the death beds of many
or wretched wandering soul, where art thou
g? And it is no wonder to come to this, when
are so long in begioning to ask the question.
now I close with this one thing, that I think
ond all question, the souls that live contented-

ly

ly under the want of assurance, are the e
daughters that dwelleth at ease, Christ and th
at a remarkable distance; it must be a cold
ter and a dark night (at best) as to their
fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point
if the seeking after assurance be so nece
duty, then let me beseech you to ponder
your selves what means are fit for you to u
ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what
means are, I shal only lay before you som

1. That ye would be much in the exer
Faith, I mean the direct acts of Faith, w
the sinner from his sense and feeling of his
layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with hi
leaning upon him for a full supply out of
ness; for indeed there are two great faults a
the Lords people, some do seek assurance o
before ever they seek to have faith. 2. So
much more taken up in debating their evid
whether they be real or not, then they
strengthning their evidences, so the most
time is spent in questioning: O is this a re
dence of assurance; where as more actual b
ing in Christ and gripping to the promise
less disputing, were the shorter and the sure
that word is most clear, *Eph.* 1.13. *Aft
lieved, ye were sealed with the spirit of prom
is*, ye got assurance, but not before ye belie
ye know, it is said, *Mat.* 9 2. And *when
their faith, he said, Son, be of good comfort,
are forgiven thee*; so then it is clear that to b
in believing, is the next way to assuran

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating of them: all assurance is by practical syllogism, the first proposition whereof must needs be a Scripture truth: And certainly a firm assent to that truth; and the souls delightful meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord, as a special mean whereby the conscience is helped to make the assumption, and also to bring forth the conclusion; for instance, we see with what strength of affection *Paul* acteth his faith on the word, 1 Tim. 1. 15, *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came to save sinners*; and presently we see what followeth upon it, *of whom I am the chief*, then is his assurance: for doubtless he meaneth, that he was the chief of saved sinners; yea, certainly a sinner while exercising himself, will often find so much sweetness in the general truths that he cannot but apply to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces and Christian duties, that this is amongst the best means to attaining to assurance, is manifest from 2 Pet. 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for indeed it is very observable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in disputing & questioning about our election, but a diligence in the practise of duties and graces, as is clear from vers. 5. *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) whereto? in adding to *your Faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, &c.* and then vers. 8. *If ye do these things, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruit-*

unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Chriſt; he doth not ſay in the knowledge of *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* ſimply, but of our Lord Je importing that, that the reſult of diligenc theſe graces ſhall be the knowledge of Chri ours, and of our intereſt in him: and then h deth (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh things, is blind and cannot ſee afar off*, that i cannot have a ſpirit of diſcerning, and canno far in any ſpiritual matter, and ſo not in the ter of his intereſt. O therefore, think not th will get aſſurance by lying down with the gard upon your bed, or by your formal praye your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to ance ye muſt be ſtriving as in an agony, for ſ word importeth which is uſed to expreſs our ligence in Chriſtian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, ſo if ever ye w come to aſſurance, ye would be tender an compect in your walking, that is a clear Pſ. 50. laſt verſ. *To him that ordereth his conv tion aright will he ſhew the ſalvation of God,* Iſai. 32. *The effect of righteouſneſs is peace an ſurance for ever.* Ah! the untender walk that ny of us have: it is no wonder to ſee us wa darkneſs, ſuch ſtinking groſs vapors that ari off our converſation cannot but engender d that hinder us from ſeeing God: and certa ſuch pearls as *aſſurance*, is not given to do ſwine, leſt they tread upon them.

SERMON VIII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether*

in the faith? prove your own selves, know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

THere are two great ballances into which men do weight themselves: there are some that weigh themselves in the ballance of *deceit*, who think that in all their labors there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the Spirit, when he shal weigh them, will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance and art found light.* O but there are many who approve themselves, whom Christ shal never approve: There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, & many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*.

2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the *Sanctuary*, who upon solid and most spiritual grounds to draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who come with boldness and confidence look Christ in the face, and say, *thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence take him in their arms, and cry out, he shal be eternally mine: and sure there is not a more pleasant life then to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I made up in him, am I not made up in him?*

Before I come to the words, there are three great and most soul-concerning errors amongst Christians of these dayes, that we desire ye would consider: 1. There are many that are more curious to know what they are, then what they should do; there are some are more taken up to

know whether they be justified and sanctif
then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and
are more desirous to know if they be in C
then indeed to be in him: and therefore we
many who do spend a great deal more time
ting that question, *whether am I in Christ, or*
then they do in using of these means by whic
Union and Communion with him may be a
ed: But oh, will ye once study more to
him, and that shal be the shortest way, to
to the knowledge of your being in him. T
great error is, that some are more desir
know what they should do, then they are de
to do what they know: are there not many
that have this question, *Wherewith shal I co*
fore the Lord; and yet we do not know his
mandment is with us, *that we should do justly*
mercy, and walk humbly with our God, A t
ror is, that we are more in talking of Chri
in believing in him, or closing with him: so
us think to win to Heaven by discourses, if w
talk of Christ, we think all is without de
controversy: but, alace! there are many w
sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing hi
day in hell. And I would only say this by th
if there be any of you that have win to any
perswasion of your interest in Christ, I
you, if you can put the conclusion upon
that in such a day of such a moneth, and in
year of God, you then did win to cry out, *I*
beloveds, and he is mine. It seemeth to ha
Davids practise. Ps. 16. 2. O *my soul, thou h*
unto the Lord, thou art my Lord: And it wa

ahs practise, Lam. 3.24. *The Lord is my portion, h my soul.* I say, ye should even mark that con. sion, as they did, that when temptations come, d begin to assault you, ye may look to your re. d that ye have set down, and be ashamed to sbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our urance at best will be but ebbing and flowing; t I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of sbelief, & above the reach of fears: I hope ere ng, we shal dispute no more, we shal be jeal. s no more, and we shall question our interest more, when all our disputings and question. s shal be sweetly drowned in that infinit Ocean eternal delight and fruition of God. *O expect. ants of heaven, expectants of heaven,* are ye not ookingafter this day? are ye not looking after it? I ow not what we do here, if we be not walking ward every day: he is upon his way, he is up. his way. O to see him, we will even stand and onder at him! I hope the day is coming, when we shal never loose our grips of Christ any more: e is coming, he is coming: and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence. O what streets are these that are there! Is there y here who is groaning for heaven? Be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shal come, he shal me, and wash all tears from our eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon words, we told you that there was five or six which we intended to consider in them. e first was, that such a thing as a distinct and ll grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ attainable; & of this we have already spoken.

The ſecond thing is, that concerning this n
and excellent thing aſſurance, there are many
ſtakes amongſt the people of God, & to make
evident, it is clear firſt in this text, from th
rious and accurate ſearch in this matter, whic
Apoſtle putteth theſe people unto, as we cle
unto you from therforce of the words, & his d
ling of theſe exhortations, *try your own ſel*
prove your own ſelves. 2. From the many c
mands which the Lord hath left upon record
we ſhould not be miſtaken concerning our
rance, 1 Cor. 3 18. *Let no man deceive hi*
Gal 6 3 *If a man think himſelf to be ſome*
when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf, and t
fore doth the Apoſtle add, *Let every one prov*
own work, and v. 7. *be not deceived.* 3. The
is clear from this, that we find in Scripture m
who have been miſtaken moſt dreadfully i
matter of their aſſurance, Hoſ. 8. *Iſrael cryeth*
my God we know thee, and yet Iſrael was in a
miſtake: for in the words following *verſ.* 3.
had caſt off the thing that was good: and *Prov*
12. we find there, *a generation that are pu*
their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed away
their iniquities. 4. It is clear from this, that
a great deſign of Satan, the great deceiver, th
might be miſtaken about that noble and we
point of our *aſſurance* of being in Chriſt: is
not a power given unto him from Chri
ceive the Nations: I may ſay, that in
doth he more prevail to deceive us then
If profanity kill its *thouſands*, deluſion k
thouſands, and this deluſion its *twenty thou*
Li

Lastly, doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, when that name which is given to our hearts, Jer. 17. 9, *It is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrace a shadow in stead of substance.

2. The next thing that we have to speak to upon this point, is to shew you where these mistakes do lie. and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1 There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations, which we beseech them to consider.

1. The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light & joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at least, not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shall not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that there

are such as proceed from a saving work of t
Spirit of grace: but waving that debate, give
leave to say this much of all enjoyments and s
sible manifestations (as to the point in hand) th
may be sometime a good supporter to underp
a Christians assurance when it tottereth, but ne
a good foundation whereon he may lay the
stone of that building: and therefore he is
wiser Christian who first tryeth the reality of
interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righ
ousnes and holines, before he trust the reality
sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comforta
soever they may seem to be. 2. Some build th
assurance upon the number & bulk of their duti
without considering the frame of their spirit, a
the principle from which they flow; they use pr
er and reading, and conference, they wait upon
dinances, and are always there where the mea
thought to be most powerful: & upon this th
take up themselves in their own arms, bles
themselves, as that poor man, Luk. 18. *I fast tw*
a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess: But alas
they do not consider that they *do but build th*
house upon the sand; which the first blast of tem
tation will overturn, because not onely all o
duties when weighted in the ballance may
found light, but when put to the tryall may
found empty, dead and lifeless things, wherein
Lords soul can have no pleasure. 3. Some are
staken in the matter of their assurance, by j
ing themselves by the Law, not knowing, or
regarding the spiritual meaning thereof: P
was a gallant man (in his own apprehensio
wh

when he was without the Law; that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the Law, he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation: and as he sheweth us, *Phil.* 3. he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord opened his eyes, we see, he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, Rom. 7. *He was alive without the Law*, that is, thought himself living and reigning above his sins; but *when the commandment came*, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived, and he died*, then he saw how that he had triumphed before the victory, he then saw all his sins alive, & as it were, risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Pauls* first condition, *alive without the Law*? O how many destroy themselves with this, they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the Law of God but only *Ten*? but alas, thou fool, thou *errest in this, not knowing the Scriptures*, should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the *Law*, and that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, wherein he sheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*? and by that infallible exposition which Christ himself, the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat.* 6. whereby he discovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye? O Atheist, thou must take up the ten Commands, and subscribe *guilty* to them all: and let me tell you this, if ye will subscribe the law to Christ, he will subscribe the Gospel to you; if

thou wilt sincerely say, *I am guilty*, he will sincerely say, I have pardoned; *Son or daugh be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee.*
Fourthly, Some build their assurance upon apprehension of their hatred of some partic sin, that albeit it was sometimes as their right h or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or it out. But O wilt thou but consider, some sin be made weak, and the Soul (though not upo right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry *get you hence*, and yet the interest of Satan may strong in the heart.
The fifth mistake is of many who judge the selves, because they go a greater length then former, & are kept free from all gross out-b king sins; how many are there who go sleep down to hell with this; I am no drunkard, no a terer, no murderer, no thief, no whore; this h have I lived in the Town, and they were n born can say I wronged them: and so they adv ture their soul upon this, they never commi any gross sin. But I beseech you, be not deceiv remember how that wretched man did spe Luke 18. 11. *I am no extortioner, nor adulter nor even as this publican, &c.* poor creature h he was, Christ giveth not a Testimonial to ev one who take it for themselves; and I must some of you, that there may be desperate Ath without God, and without Christ in the W and yet be free of gross outbreaking sins: I do think, but many of these who crucified the L of Glory, were keeped from other gross sins. W knowest thou, O man, that there is more fav

shewed to thee, in that thou art keeped from some gross sins, when yet thou hast a desperatly wicked heart, then is shewed to the Devil, when some links of his chain are taken in, & restraining power keeping him in from his utmost bounds. God will sometimes restrain a hypocrite, or a heathen, as it was said of *Abimelech, and God restrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, when thou art far from having the power of conquering grace, It may be also, that all that abstaining from outward outbreakings, proceedeth but from outward disadvantages, and not from any fear of God, or respect to him, yea not so much as from the fear of any eternal punishment: are there not many amongst us, I believe it, there are many that take away shame, & Church censure, or civil punishment, and other inconveniencies of that sort, and set a thousand hells before them, they would not be keeped back from one sin, but would take their hazard of them all: Yea, is it not want of tentation, and nothing else, that hindereth many from gross outbreakings; if Satan would come but with a kindled match, there wanteth no more to set tongue & hands, & all on fire of hell. O wretched soul, do but ask thy self how often thou hast tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee, & how often hast thou followed a tentation when it fled from thee; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways that thou could not overtake thy lovers, how many a long look hast thou sent after them, and what lustings of thy spirit within; and do ye think that heart sins are nothing, although thou had no outbreakings, what were the matter

of that; if thou had not a tongue thou would break the third command, and *curse God in thy heart*, if thou had not an eye, thou could commit adultery *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy assurance upon this, that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter when yet all filthiness within.

The sixth false foundation upon which I am sure too many build their assurance, is their gifts and parts, & especially upon these two, the gift of prayer, and the gift of knowledge: but believe it, it is not much to be a Christian in tongue, but it is much to be a Christian in heart; know ye not that this will cast out many, *We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils*. No doubt these had been excellent flourishers, and if the tongue would have done it, they had been highly advanced; but yet ye see these men meet with a *depart from me, I know you not*. Ah, think upon it, he is not the best Christian that is the best Orator. Religion that is pure and undefiled, consisteth more in the affection, then in the tongue; and more in practise, then in profession, I beseech you when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well you have done, and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O saith one, my conscience doth not charge me with any thing: I thank God, I have a quiet mind, and nothing troubles me; but ah poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, & therefore all is at peace a dumb

a dumb conscience, and a seared conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart, and because they say so, the Lord shal not spare them, but all the curses in his Book shall ly upon them.

The eight false ground, is, the approbation of other Christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised Christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. *O* cursed be the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars; O man or Woman, let me assure you this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ, subscribed will all the hands of every Christian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you and it both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word, *I know you not*, as if he said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The ninth false ground, is their diligent observing all the Ordinances, their going to Preachings, & their going to Communions, *and running to and fro*, pretending this end, *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at Table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shal say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shall say, *depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong

strong delusion of Atheists, of which no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shall only say, it may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy sinful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to Heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, and though I will not say it (ye: it cometh nearer truth) I had never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to Hell: O wilt thou but consider, what if he be *heaping coals upon thy head, and fatting thee to the day of slaughter*? What if this word be your portion, *Eat, drink, and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must eternally die*? What are all your pleasures? and what are all your honors? and what are all your possessions? What are they all? are they not a bone cast unto a dog? the Lord valueth them not, What if they be *the fatting of you to the day of slaughter*?

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in Christ, when indeed they have: they commonly deceive themselves, and vex their own spirits upon some of these or the like mistakes. 1. Some judge of their estate by their present frame and condition, so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundations: and to such I would only say, That every change of condition doth not speak a change of estate; a Child of God may be in much darkness and under much deadness, and yet a Child of God still,

still, *Psal.*73. It was an evil frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips, and holdeth him by the right hand: *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth fast his integrity; and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine?

Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate, & if Christ do not smile alwayes, we know not what it is to keep up the Faith of our interest; and indeed this is a great fault among Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his dispensation, doth that speak forth a change of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voyce to us, but we think he changeth his heart. Christ cannot speak to us in the whirlewind; but we cry out, Why art thou become unto me as an enemy? Oh, shal precious Christ be thus mistaken.

The third ground of mistake about our interest in Christ, is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge and search himself, he can find nothing in himself, but what is the matter of doubting, & therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a believer: But, O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all: O if Christians knew to judge of themselves be what they are in Christ, & not to be what they are in themselves, that with one eye they may look to themselves, & cry out, *I am undone,*

and

and with another look to Christ, & cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*, that with one they might look to themselves, and blush, with another eye they might look unto Christ *hope*: that with one eye they might look to themselves and *weep*, and with another eye they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*. O Christian, wilt judge alway of thy self be what thou art in Christ and not be what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with temtations that put thee to dispute thy interest do but send them to Christ to get an answer, say, O precious Christ, answer this temtation, this is Christs way with the soul, the Law may bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the Law, and deliver us over to it, not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it, as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a daily and constant travelling between Christ and the Law: when thou hast broke the Law, flie unto Christ to take away thy guilt, and when thou hast closed with Christ; come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake, is, that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them; some Christians if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, and mortification in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisy; but I must say that

thee, we should not only weigh our graces in e ballance, but try them also by the touch-one, for the smallest piece of gold, is gold, & the ast degree of Faith, *is alike precious faith* with at the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistakes amongst Christi-ns is this, that they compare themselves more nto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by e word. O saith one, If I were like *David*, I ould believe, but I am not like *David*, nor *Job*, or *Hezekiah*; and therefore there is none of the aints to which I should go, and if I should call, ere is none to answer, and why then should I elieve? I would only say to thee whose objecti-n that is, it is even *Davids* objection, *Psal.* 22. 6. *Our fathers trusted in thee: O* they were ex-llent man, but what a man am I, *A worm, & not man*, and yet he was put from that objection: nd I would say this, are ye below him? In what? hope ye are not below *David* in necessity; Now ough ye be below him in grace, if ye be not be-low him in necessity, ye have so much the more ight to believe: for as we said before, necessity iveth you a right, and the more necessity, the reater right to believe.

The sixth ground is, that Christians judge of eir estate by Christs part of the covenant, not by their own, rather examining themselves y what Christ hath promised to do for them, hen by what is left to them to do, which thing if were heeded, would put a close to many of out istakes and disputings.

Having now laid out some mistakes upon ei-

ther

either hand, the next we would do, is to pr
some considerations to press you to guard a
these mistakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, that mistak
bout ones interest in Christ, and assurance,
most universal and popular evil: it is not one
city, nor two of a family, but many are mis
in their interest in Christ: that word, *Prov.* 3
*There is a generation that are pure in their
eyes, and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity*
not one or two that are under this mistake, b
is a generation: and I suppose there are ma
us, we are of this tribe and generation, Mat
22. He saith, *many in that day shal say unto me
Lord, and have we not prophesied, and yet he
say unto them, I now you not*: Since it is so uni
sal a mistake, I intreat you, be much in the se
of your selves, search your own selves; cert
I think, if there were but within this Church
that were under this mistake, it should put m
to this, *Master, is it I? Master, is it I?* but h
much more since there is a generation of m
stakers should it not be our exercise every da
cry out, is it I?

The second consideration is, That as it i
most universal, so also it is a most irrecover
mistake; if ye mistake about this your bei
Christ, there is no making up of that mista
once ye pass the borders of Time with this
your right hand, I am in Christ, There is no
of recovery, eternity will cut off access to ma
that mistake; I intreat you, go not down to
grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet C

may say. I know you not: I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint, and if all the Ministers that ever ye spoke to should praise you in the gate, and declare you to be a Son and a Daughter of *Abraham*; yet when ye shall bring up your testimonial to Heaven, and the Father shal read it, and shal ask you, where is my Sons Name? if that be not there, it will certainly be rejected, and cast over the bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul-destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of their immortal soul, according to that word, Isai. 44. 20. *A deceived heart hath led him aside*, and what is the fruits of it, *so that he cannot deliver his soul*, & by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul: I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chariot of delusion; we know some Christ guideth to Heaven by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life till they be in sight of hell; but it is true also, there are others whom the Devil guideth to Hell, by the very borders of Heaven, he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gate of Heaven all their days, and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Fourthly, if once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three noble disadvantages attending upon them 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the Ordinances; for when

he

he beareth preaching, he will apply promi
when he should apply threatnings; and upo
other hand, apply threatnings, when he sh
apply promises: and so that which should b
medicine, becometh poyson to him. 2. As l
as he is under this mistake, it maketh him th
cannot pity nor have compassion upon him
that though he be the most suitable object of c
passion, yet he knows not what is to weep
his own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces a
delusions, all his good motions are but fa
and all his mortification counterfeit, and a
tenderness is but the mother of stupidity,
therefore guard against mistakes about your i
est in Christ, I intreat you.

Fifthly, consider that mistakes about ones i
est, is a most abiding and constant mistake, b
lieve it, if once we mistake in this, it is one
hundered if ever we come right again: th
clear, Jer. 8. 5. *They hold fast deceit, they ke
with both their hands:* and Isai. 44 20. *There
lie in their right hand*, that is, they hold the lie
they keep it with all their power, I say. if
one be mistaken concerning their interes
Christ, it is hard to put them from it, yea, de
on it is such an abidi[illegible]hing, that we find C
speaketh of it as if it would [illegible]n one b
the judgement seat of Christ, [illegible]s if some w
never quite their hopes of heaven, till Christ
nounce that word, *Depart from me, I know
not*: delusion may carry us over the borde
time, and lead us in to Eternity.

Sixthly, there is much counterfeit Re

hat is in these days there is a painted faith, there s a painted l. ve, there is a painted mortification, nd there is a painted tenderness: some they love hadows and picture- and yet they do not love the ery shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are imbracing Christ, and yet are mbracing a delusion and a fancy?

That which thirdly, we would speak to from his point, is, to give you some evidences by which ye may know if the assurance ye have of your beg in Christ, be right or no: Believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*; which the Devil and their own deceitful heart hath drawn, and Christ never gave consent unto it: And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which we may discern.

First, a real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance, this is clear, 1 Joh. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him*, that is, perswaded of this that he shal come to heaven, *He will purify himself as he is pure*: And 2 Corin. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit.* O! when a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, *what have I to do any more with idols?* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every tentation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price*, I cannot now dispose of my self: and if your assurance of going to Heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils *pillow sowed under your arm holes.*

holes. Is it possible a person can be assured of Heaven, and not study holiness? can such a delusion as this overtake you?

Secondly, a real assurance putteth the Christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion and fellowship with God: it is impossible for one to be assured, and not to be saying *be sick of love:* this is clear, *Song* 2. 16. 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his:* and immediatly followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe or a young heart upon the mountains of Bether:* And it is clear, *Song* 7. 10. 11. *I am my beloveds and his desire is towards me:* and what followeth upon that? She cometh and inviteth Christ, *O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.* O when gave ye Christ such an invitation as this, O precious Christ, let us *lodge in the villages and go down to the secret places of the field:* And *Psal.* 63 1. *My God,* there is his assurance: and immediatly followeth upon that, *Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee. as in dry parched land where no water is.* There is a pressing desire after communion. But I would ask you, are there not many here who have the hope of Heaven (in their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ was never with them? I desire to say to thee, (be who thou wilt) *be not deceived, God is not mocked; that which thou soweſt, that shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, who would let Christ live in Heaven many days, without giving him one visite, if he would let us alone. But, O if we were within sight of our interest in Christ: how often would this be our compla-

who

when he were absent, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; or my idol hath carried me away from him, and I know not where to find him.

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise; believe it, I think this one of the most searching evidences of assurance: There are some Christians, they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction: and I tell you the reason of it, prayer is a selfish grace, (so to speak) but praise is a denying grace; prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, Exod. 15. 2. *He is my God, I will prepare him a habitation; and he is my fathers God, I will exalt him.* Psalm 118 28. *He is my God, I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him*: What needeth *David* these repetitions, might not one serve? No, saith he, I would even spend my days in this, *My God, my God*: there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet *batologies*: Now I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart-exercise of praise, by all is assurance that thou hast, this is an evidence indeed: but alace, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ *is* matchless unto him: as is clear, Song 2. 3. *I sat down under his shadow*, there is faith and assurance of it, and what accompanieth that? *As the Apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*: Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetness, his power, his beauty, and his usefulness is above all.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing: assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low the dust: Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes when he cryed out, *I am less then the least of* mercies; What? Was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, and what is my Fathers house, that thou hast brought* hitherto? and was not *Paul* a low man in his eyes, Ephes. 3. 8. 16. *I am less then the least of* thy *Saints*, and when he cryed out, *I am the* of *sinners*: The assurance that is real, it will a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips.*

Sixthly, Real assurance will put him to much pleasure, and delight in the going about duties: that word, *Ps.* 40. 8 *My God*, saith that is his assurance, and presently he subjoyns *I delight to do thy will, O Lord*, this he speaks of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type Christ, *Psal.* 119. 115, *Depart from me evil doers for I will keep the Commandments of my God*; I believe it, the love of Christ when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty: and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these days, that setteth men above all duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count the Gospel as well as the Law, *but beggerly rundiments*, and cry out to their neighbors, *Stand aback, for I am holier then thou* must needs be a delusion.

Lastly, There are these three properties of real assurance, it is a begotten assurance, it is a living assurance, and it is a constraining assurance. The first two properties of it are set down in

2 Pet. 1. 3. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope*; Who begat that assurance in thee? I suppose some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Christ be not the Father of thy assurance, it will evanish and pass away. And, secondly, it must be a living assurance; some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant *Isaac* that we have, if he command us to sacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up.

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate: What think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or no? I suppose, if Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, we would have a thin assembly: I confess, I wonder that, that word doth not make us to walk with sadness, *Many are called, but few are chosen.*

Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, and as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your Judge, what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ?* I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, are ye, and ye in Christ? O! I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors: we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith

that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion and the faith that thou never took pains to keep and yet it keeped it self, that is too like a delu on: the faith that never knew what it was to p thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delu on. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, Lam. 3. 34. *Let us search & try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord:* when thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this, there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you, but you have enough of this: and know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come; but it shal not be for your advantage to stay away till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away:* O persons that are in Christ, *Come away:* we must preach that word, *come away*, unto you as long as ye are here till ye come and *be fixed as a pillar in the House of God*, and go no more out, O how to be near him: O Christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shal I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ? When shal there be nothing between my heart and him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between him and us, till we be above the clouds. O the immediate soul-infoldings and imbracings of Christ! Are ye never sending a messenger to Heaven desiring a pass to go away that ye may enjoy them? and are ye not longing for the day, when

the water of *Jordan* shal divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall pass thorow? Now let us sing. *Sing praises to our King, sing praises; for he hath gone up with a shout, and shal come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

SERMON IX.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I Think ere long, there are many that passeth under the notion of professors, that the veriest Atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou also become like unto one of us?* Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, and in a fools paradise, that *dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they shall be hungry*; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us to search and examine our state and condition; profanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion and presumption hath slain their ten thousands, it was an ancient complaint of Christ, Luke 12. 57. *And why even of our selves judge ye not what is right*; I am perswaded of this, there are many decreets of peace past upon Earth, that are never ratified in Heaven: there are many that cry out, *The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by the sword of his justice shal hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the last occasion,

that we spake upon these words, there were
things we intended to speak from them: of
first three we have spoken.

That which we intend to speak to at this time
is, That there is much soul advantage and spi-
ual gain, that doth redound to the Christian
the distinct perswasion of his interest in Chri
this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the co
mand of searching and trying themselves, as if
had said, it is a business that will be so much
your advantage, that it is incumbent for you
search and try diligently: And for further clear
of the point; I shall only give these three plac
Rev. 2.17. *I will give unto them a white stone, a
in the stone a new name written that no man kn
eth, but he that hath received it*: *By the new na
and the white stone*, is understood assurance; a
the intimation of it to the Soul: This indeed
such a mercy, that I defy any to make langu
of it, no man knoweth it, much less can be e
press it, but he that is the possessor of it, and
place, Isai, 62. 2. ℣. *I will give unto them a n
name, which the mouth of the Lord will name*: O
what a name must that be which the mouth of
Lord will name: I think, what he giveth, m
be one of the noblest names that ever was giv
all the stiles and titles under Heaven cannot
qual it. And thirdly, we see *David* in the 18.
found much sweetness & advantage in this, wh
nine times he hath that word, *my*: *My stren
my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my streng
and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and
high tower.* Q *David*, what needeth all th
My's

My's? *David* would answer thus, O! he is so sweet in himself, but O! much sweeter to me, when I put to that positive note, My.

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages of assurance, The first is, that a person that is assured of his interest in Christ, he is much in desiring communion with Christ: *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth* (there is his assurance) *where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon*, there is desire of communion: and Song 7.10.11. *My beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me*, there is her assurance and immediatly followeth, *Come my beloved, let us go forth unto the fields, let us lodge in the villages*, there her desire of communion. Song 2 16 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, and what followeth upon that? *He feedeth among the lillies until the day break, and the shadows flie away: Turn my beloved, and be as a Roe or a wild Hart upon the mountains of Bether*: that is in short, let me have sweet correspondency and fellowship with thee till the day of eternity shal come. I think the desires of an assured Christian, they are like the grave, they cry continually, Give, give, and they never say, it is enough: What is the reason ye seek so little after fellowship with Christ? it is even this, ye are not perswaded of your interest in him: believe it, if once ye had attained to this blest length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a distance with him as ye do, for the most part: O but assurance maketh absence from Christ an unsupportable burden, Psalm 22. 1 *My God, my God,*

here is assurance, and immediatly followeth
complaint, *Why hidest thou thy self from me.* So
2 1. 2. 3. that word, *Him whom my soul loves*
made her to weep so much under absence fro
Christ, and *John* 20. 13. when the Angels
the question at Mary, *Woman, why weepest th*
I think she thought it a needless question, and
tells them the cause of it, *They have taken a*
my Lord; I think her heart was at her mo
when she pronounced these two words, My *Lo*
she spake them with a great deal of emphasis
force, could ye resent absence with Christ so
tle, if ye were assured he were yours? I confe
it is no wonder when persons loss that which
not their own, that they weep not much for t
loss of it, but O! to loss that which is our own,
maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly, It maketh the soul to have a high
matchless esteem of precious Christ, Song 5. 10
My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among
ten thousand: O saith the Spouse, I never saw
like, and I shall never see his like again: there is
much in that My, interest maketh her look upon
Christ with another eye nor she would have done,
strangers look upon him but as *a tree planted on*
the sand, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is*
precious, not to every one: and Song 2. 2. *I sat*
down under his shadow with great delight, the rea-
son is interest in the words going before, *As the*
apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my be-
loved amongst the sons; yea, assurance will make
every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to a soul
as is clear, Song 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether love-*
ly, or

or, *he is all desires.* I tell you what assurance will do, it will make Christs person pleasant and precious, to the Soul, it will make Christs Nature pleasant to the Soul, it will make Christs Offices pleasant to the Soul, it will make Christs promises pleasant to the Soul, it will make Threatnings pleasant to the Soul, it will make the smell of Christs garments pleasant to the Soul, and it will make the kisses of his mouth pleasant unto the soul: *O* saith the assured Christian, there is nothing of Christ but it *is* most pleasant, and is all desires: his threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a friend, and his kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine, his Name it is pleasant, it is a precious oyntment powered forth, his smellings are most delightsome, *Whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars:* O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleasant is it to the Soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ? even this, the want of assurance that he is your husband.

Thirdly, Assurance will make the Christian patiently to submit to every cross and sad dispensation that he meeteth with: this is clear, *Heb.* 10. 34. *They took with joy the spoiling of their goods;* and what made them do so? *They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more induring substance,* I tell you, assurance it will answer all crosses with this, *Christ is mine,* when they are afflicted, assurance will lift up its face, and cry out, *Christ is mine,* and when they are reproached, they will comfort themselves with this, *Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus.*

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from Apo-

lacy and defection from Christ, 2 Pet. 1
Make your calling and election sure, and if
this, (saith he) *ye shal never fall,* Heb. 3. 12.
It is there set down as a fruit of the *evil h*
misbelief, it makes *us depart from the living*
but on the contrary, assurance knitteth the
to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not e
broken: Believe it, the assured Christian can
out with much confidence of faith, *My moun*
standeth strong, I shal never be moved; the ass
Christian can cry out with much chearfulnes
God will I praise his word, in God have I pu
trust I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto
yea he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of
ger, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, w*
shal I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life
whom shal I be afraid? Psalm 27. 1.

Fifthly, Assurance keepeth all the graces of
spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refres
dew upon our branches, which maketh every
sweetly to blossom in its season. 1. It stir-re
the exercise of love: O how vigorous are the
ings of love, when a Christian can cry out
beloved is mine, and I am his, Song 1. 13. *M*
loved, there is her assurance, *He is a bun*
myrrhe, and shall ly all night between my bre
that is, as long as time shal last, I shal never
Christ out of my heart, there is love, 1 Jo
19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*;
hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth
the sense of his love to us putteth our hearts
a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assur
keeps up the exercise of prayer, it is the ass
Chri

Christian that can pray best, and to most advantage, and in these three things especially is prayer helped by assurance: First, It helpeth in the point of *boldness*. O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the Throne of Grace, *crying Abba Father, and my Lord, and my God.* Secondly, it helpeth our *diligence* in prayer, Psal. 63. 1. O *my God*, there is assurance, *early will I seek thee*, there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. Thirdly, It helpeth the *fervency* of prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, and my flesh longeth for thee*, there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 3. Assurance keepeth in exercise and life; the grace of mortification: as is clear by comparing, 2 *Cor.* 4. *v.* last, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen*: *O Paul*, what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world, O saith *Paul*, and would you know the ground of it. *We know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*: my house and my treasure is in the heaven, I must have my heart there, and my eyes also: Would ye know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And 4. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility; here is nothing will keep Christians so humble as assurance, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live yet not I, But Christ liveth in me*, *Eph*, 3. 8. there he is all in *exalting grace and debasing himself*: It is the misbeliever discouraged person that dwelleth neareſt pride; believe it, misbeliefs big with child of pride and apostacy, these are the two children, which

which the fruitful mother will bring forth
5. it will help the grace of *repentance*: We
know what would make the Christian to
it is even this, to take Christ in our arms a
him ours, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shal look unto*
that is there faith; *and they shal mourn*
mourneth for his only son: I think it is know
experience, the soul never weeps more te
under the conviction of sin, then when he
Christ in his arms, and I can say, *He is mi*
how sweetly doth they then complain, t
not a sight of Christ as there own, whe
have offended, but it breaks all their he
pieces, & it is as a sword piercing into the
when they cry out, O what a fool was I to
such a precious One, in whom I had so mu
terest? Was it not sense of interest that
Mary wash the feet of Christ with her
Lastly, it will keep in exercise the grace of
1 *Pet.* 1. 8. It is faith which maketh one
joyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory: W
ye know why your graces are withered? W
ye know why all the pleasant plants of God
in your soul are decayed? it is this, ye live
out sight of your interest in Christ: believe
so I may speak) assurance will be a water
your graces every morning, and refresh
every hour, it being as a channel through
divine influence is conveyed to the incre
grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the
stian by assurance of his interest in Christ, is,
it maketh death exceeding pleasant and com

able to the soul; What maketh death *the* King of terrors, and what maketh it so unto us? Is it no this, we go to heaven under a cloud? the assured Christian can take death in his arms, and cry out, welcome: *O friend:* the assured Christian, when he seeth the chariots his father sends for him doth with old *Jacob rejoyce*, and *Psal.* 23. *When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:* what brought you that length, *David*? I tell you why, saith he, for *God is with me, v.* 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company: it is the assured Christian that can cry out, *Why should I fear death?* should I not laugh at destruction? I think indeed, the assured Christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows: and is not the day of death his coronation day, his marriage day the day of his triumph and of his entering into rest, and why then should he fear it?

The seventh advantage is, that a Christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy, as a wonder; it is the assured Christian that cryeth out, *I am less then the least of all thy mercies:* there is not a mercy he meets with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it, that it came from my husband, and from my father, it will be better to him then the sweetest wine.

Lastly, Assurance doth exceedingly help us to chearfulness in obedience, O that is a remarkable

connexion

[illegible] faith of assurance.

[illegible] that *Paul* hath, *Acts* 27.23. *The* [illegible] *I am, and whom I serve*: That pa[illegible] 5.14. is very observable, *The lo*[illegible] *constraineth us, &c.* Why art thou so p[illegible] Minister *Paul*? *Why*? *knowest thou no* [illegible] *the flesh,* are not led by carnal interests, [illegible] [illegible]ctions; are so busie and diligent, as all [illegible] world counteth the mad? Why? (saith he) [illegible] will not let me rest, if I would be lazie and [illegible] nal, or fold my hands to sleep: the love [illegible] Christ doth always sound that in my ears, th[illegible] was dead; and he hath died for me; that he[illegible] forth I should not live unto my self but [illegible] him who died for me: *Now to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore*

We give praise.

FINIS.